



Seminarians

SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN MEXICO



BY JIM "BUTCH" MURPHY
Country Coordinator for Mexico

Jim Murphy serves as a Renewal Ministries' country coordinator for Mexico, organizing and leading multiple mission trips each year to serve the impoverished in Mexico City. He is also the founder and president of Vera Cruz Communications and has been involved in youth ministry on parish, diocesan, national, and international levels; has served as a member of several parish pastoral teams; and has worked in various religious education programs. Jim also is the former chairman of the National Service Committee for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and former president of International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Service.

Jim and his wife, Susan, have one son and live in Western Michigan.

For several years, we have collaborated on an annual mission trip to Mexico with St. Paul Seminary, the major seminary for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. This year, our team traveled with nineteen seminarians and two priests. While in Mexico, our primary mission site is a garbage dump that is home to more than one-thousand people. This trip is the first step of a process with the seminarians that continues with outreach to Hispanic parishes and ministries around St. Paul, Minnesota.



➤ PILGRIMAGE

On the Feast of the Epiphany, the people who live in the garbage dump and surrounding areas process with a statue of Our Lady from the dump to the Basilica of our Lady of Guadalupe. It is an annual tradition to celebrate Epiphany. We processed with our friends from the dump and were joined by 1500 other pilgrims. Together, we walked about twenty-five kilometers. Our bus driver, Angel, remained nearby with the bus so that people who were getting tired could take a rest. We left the garbage dump at 7 a.m. and arrived at the basilica at 3 p.m. The journey provided us with wonderful opportunities to interact with our friends from the dump. Although difficult, walking this journey together strengthened our relationships and edified our team.

ST. JUDE PARISH

The next day, we went to Mass at St. Jude's, where our friend Fr. Manuel is pastor. Our priests and seminarians participated in the Mass. Afterward, we helped distribute clothing brought by the seminarians and mingled with the parishioners. One woman with severe hearing loss asked one of our priests to pray for her. The priest formed a small prayer team from our group and prayed with the woman. Her hearing was restored! She was overwhelmed, and we were greatly edified to see the Lord working in such a clear way.

The priests and seminarians always have a beautiful time when meeting with Fr. Manuel. Everyone has a chance to be very honest about the joys and challenges of the priesthood. One of our priests remarked to me that a seminarian who had been with us a year before had been very uncomfortable being involved in Hispanic ministry. After his time with Fr. Manuel, however, he fully embraced the ministry and is now happily involved with it. This visit is one of the highlights of the trip for this group. It also provides great support and fellowship for Fr. Manuel.

THE 'BASURERO'

Our day at the *basurero*, or garbage dump, started with our two priests saying Mass at the dump. At the end of Mass, we presented the community with a framed set of the Stations of the Cross and some large banners to hang in their chapel. This beautiful artwork was donated by Dave Norris, who has gone with us on mission to Mexico many times. The priests did a wonderful job of involving the community while they blessed all the art. The local people were deeply touched. The art will be displayed either in the chapel or the new school. We distributed food, clothing, and general supplies that the seminarians had brought for the people. It was a very happy and peaceful day.

◦ **At the end of our day in the dump, a local leader took the team on a walking tour. This is always a very sobering and deeply impactful experience for the seminarians. We also saw a new school building that they are slowly building there.**

THE MEDICAL CLINIC

After the seminarians left, we had a medical team arrive to care for people in the garbage dump and the people of the St. Jude parish. At both places, we were warmly greeted by our friends, started with a brief time of prayer, and served about thirty people. People seem in wonder that we continue to visit them in such a consistent way. It is a great encouragement to them.

IN CONCLUSION

This trip was very fruitful! The priests' homilies and the seminarians' messages clearly proclaimed the Word. It is an honor to serve those who will in turn serve others for generations to come.



PLEASE PRAY

▸ For those facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles, that the Lord would take them by the hand and guide them, and that they would be able to put all their trust in Him.

▸ That the Lord would bring healing to strained relationships, especially within families, and increase their love of Him and each other.

▸ For the prayer intentions of all our supporters and their family members, especially as they face the challenges of illness and economic uncertainty.

