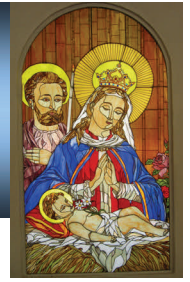




# La Sagrada Familia



*News from and about our family in the Dominican Republic*

July, 2015

Eighth Issue

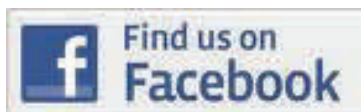
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Thanks for being a friend!

## **2016 - A Year of Celebration** **-- Antoinette Mensah**

We continue to thank God for the longevity of our relationship with our sister parish, La Sagrada Familia! We are quickly approaching 35 years of solidarity on our Christian journey. What follows are some of the events in development for our celebration. We hope that as your schedule permits you will join us.

**Opening Celebration, January 21, 2016** will be the start of our year long celebration. We will come together with Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI to celebrate our opening liturgy at the cathedral – the mother church of our archdiocese. We look forward to having previous pastors join us to celebrate the good works done and continuing in the Dominican Republic.

**Lenten Retreat, 2016:** we will travel to our sister parish for a week to ten days. We hope to provide a time for developing connections, prayer and reflection. More details will be coming in late summer or early fall with exact dates. Please consider joining us for this exciting opportunity.

**Anniversary Pilgrimage, January 17 - 24, 2017.** Our year long celebration will conclude in the Dominican Republic with a delegation led by Archbishop ListECKI. Not only will we be able to renew old acquaintances, this pilgrimage will provide an opportunity for personal and spiritual transformation.

As we move closer to the dates we will definitely provide more information on our website and Facebook page, and through our email lists. If you would like to receive information about the events and trips as details are decided, email us at [wmo@archmil.org](mailto:wmo@archmil.org) and we will add you to our mailing list.

[More events are listed on the following page]

## 2016 - A Year of Celebration

[Continued from previous page]

**Summer 2016.** Fr. Juan Manuel and Anthony Mensah, a graduate of St. Lawrence Seminary and a member of St. Martin de Porres Parish in Milwaukee, met this year to lay the foundation for a summer pilgrimage for inner city youth/young adult groups in Milwaukee. During Anthony's recent visit he had an opportunity to connect with a few of the youth group leaders and learn a little more about how he could help make a difference. Anthony would love to engage young people in Milwaukee's central city to "raise awareness of our sister parish and to open those in the city to the global nature of our faith." Anthony has a passion for music and would like to help expand music ministry through a music camp. One goal of the camp would be to provide the parish with more instruments, which would enhance the Sunday liturgy and the sessions of those who travel in the parish providing catechism. Look for upcoming information on the trip.



Anthony is pictured above right with Fr. Juan Manuel and below with Wellington, the youth leader of el Proyecto 2C .

**June/July: Deacons Societal Ministry Immersion.** In collaboration with the Offices for Diaconal Formation, Deacon Services and Continuing Formation for Clergy, we will offer first year candidates an opportunity to spend two weeks in service and reflection as they apply their studies to the practicalities of life in the Dominican Republic. What a powerful experience they will have as they join our brothers and sisters in prayer and day-to-day living.

**September: Deacon Pilgrimage to La Sagrada Familia.** Later in early fall, current Permanent Deacons will also travel for what we hope will be an ongoing retreat experience for our archdiocese.

As part of this new collaboration with the Deacons, we would like to extend a note of gratitude for a generous donation of \$3,500 from the Archdiocesan Deacon Council presented to our sister parish in support of education in the Dominican Republic.



Pictured left to right: Deacon John Ebel, Fr. Juan Manuel Camacho, Deacon Dave Zimprich and Deacon Al Lazaga.

World Mission Ministries



One Church One Community One Love

## **Collaboration and Friendship: Rays of Hope in the Midst of Unrest**

**-- Fr. Juan M. Camacho**

The Dominican Republic and Haiti have gone through difficult times in the last couple of years. I have shared with you on several occasions those tough moments. As a priest, I am compelled by the Gospel to be prophetic in my ministry. The role of the prophet is that of denouncing injustice, but also that of pointing out God's work in the midst of the ordinary life of the people. This time, I want to share with you a story of a family that moved my heart and helped me to understand the complexity of the relations between Haitians and Dominicans. I think this situation is common to many Dominicans and Haitians throughout the country.

Beda is a woman who participates in the Haitian Ministry of the Parish. She sings at the liturgy and has a beautiful family. Lele, her husband, works for a Dominican farmer who owns a big farming land. Lele seems to have a steady and good relationship with this Dominican farmer so Lele worked out a deal with him to use the land to plant green peppers underneath the farmer's growing plantains. The Dominican farmer agreed on the condition that Lele would water and weed out the little plantains while the green peppers grow in the midst of the plantation.

In the Parish of La Sagrada Familia, we have a Microloan Program to help those who do not have access to the local banking system. We have helped more than 30 families in the past few years with this program. Once Lele worked out the plan with his patron, Beda came to the Parish and asked for support through the Microloan Program. They received \$350 for the green peppers which allowed them to plant their crop. They got a good return on the peppers and they paid back the entire loan without any problem.

This is a sign of the seeds of friendship and collaboration that exists among Dominicans and Haitians. In the deal, both Lele and his Dominican friend benefited. But what is more important to me is that they had the capacity to work together in harmony. There was no need for lawyers, media people or big documents for these two men to come to an agreement. They took each other's word as a solid commitment to work in solidarity for their best interest. In the midst of all the conflict and struggle amongst Haitians and Dominicans, sometimes magnified by the media, there are rays of love and understanding. The media sometimes misleads the uneducated but well-meaning people putting them on the cusp of confrontation.

La Sagrada Familia strives to promote the ties that exist between these two peoples. In the liturgies, we bring together the two communities in order to create an atmosphere of friendship and solidarity. In our programs, we bring together Haitians and Dominicans to collaborate for the development of all. Beda and Lele had the chance to produce some peppers that gave them solvency and the land owner was able to have someone caring for his crop at all times. These are small signs of hope in the midst of the great unrest that exists in the country. This is the seed for a greater friendship and collaboration between Dominicans and Haitians. In this small event, the Parish, the owner and Beda's family collaborated together in what I call a great act of sharing. An act of sharing that could be multiplied. Sharing everybody's gifts will give life to opportunity to work and dream together for a country in which friendship and collaboration transcend all differences.

**A walking we will go, A walking we will go... Ready, Set ...Walk!  
For Catholic Schools**

**Save the Date for the 3rd Annual "Soles for Catholic Education" Walk  
October 17, 2015**

**Last year we raised nearly \$3,000 to support education in the  
Dominican Republic. We hope you will join us for a day of fun and  
sharing the good news of La Sagrada Familia.**

**To register [click here](#) or you can go to [www.catholicsschoolswalk.org](http://www.catholicsschoolswalk.org).  
Click on "Register Now"**

**Log in if you were a registered on the team last year  
Or Register as a New Participant – choose La Sagrada Familia**

**Photos from last year's walk in La Sagrada Familia.**



**Our First Educators are our Parents.**



**We Fight for Education for a Better Life.**

**WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WMM OR LA SAGRADA FAMILIA?**

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<http://tinyurl.com/WorldMissionMinistries> .

To access the La Sagrada Familia section of the Archdiocese website, [click here](#) or you can go to:  
<http://tinyurl.com/SagradaFamilia-MKE> .

## Reflections from La Sagrada Familia, Dominican Republic

-- Ellen Brostrom

I am a member of Lumen Christi parish in Mequon. At the end of January, 2015, I had the privilege of going on a six day retreat to the Parish of La Sagrada Familia (The Holy Family) in the Dominican Republic. La Sagrada Familia has been in a sister parish relationship with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for almost 35 years. Bishop Donald Hying (formerly of Milwaukee and now of Gary, IN) accompanied our group of ten. The retreat was powerful and transformative.

The people of the parish are incredible – full of love and warmth and many hugs – even in the face of often harsh and difficult circumstances. We attended Mass four times during our six day trip: three at the parish in Spanish and one at a retreat house near the Caribbean Sea in English. The Masses at the parish were joyful, spirit-filled celebrations with wonderful music provided by the young adult and youth groups. Before Mass, people greeted each other with a hug. During the sharing of the peace, it was ebullient: the priests going throughout the whole church and neighbor reaching out to neighbor exchanging hugs and “La Paz” (peace). I have not felt so much concentrated love in a long time. It was amazing.

Not only are the people filled with love and joy, they are tenacious, industrious and enduring. For some, life is very hard. For example, we met Alicia, a woman who has given birth to five children, all of whom have been born with cerebral palsy. Two of the children are pictured to the right with Father Esteban of the parish. Two have passed away. Alicia continues to care for the other three. Their home was a crude structure which did not keep out the rain. The parish worked with members of the community to build them a new home of cinder block with a tin roof. When we visited them, she was so pleased to see us. When we left, she gave four eggs fresh from a nest to Father Juan Manuel, the other priest serving La Sagrada Familia. Like the woman who gave her last two mites, Alicia gave all she had (Luke 21:1-4).



Each of us lived with a parish family during our stay. I was privileged to stay with Maria del Carmen, a beautiful and faith filled woman who has been an active member of the parish for decades. I am pictured here with her and her husband, Ciraco. Their home was simple but lovely -- very clean and welcoming. Each morning, Maria made me a simple breakfast and then read the daily mass readings with me, she in Spanish and me in English. We would exchange a few comments, but we mostly just shared a quiet sacred space since I speak little Spanish and she little English. It was an honor to be a guest in her home.

[Continued on the following page].

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## REFLECTIONS FROM LA SAGRADA FAMILIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

[Continued from previous page]

The breadth of the work done by the parish is remarkable. I really felt the power of the Catholic Church in action. The members of the community worked hand-in-hand with the parish to realize their personal dignity as sons and daughters of God. For example, the parish has a health center which includes a physician, a physical therapist, a pharmacy and a dental clinic that is staffed periodically. The parish also runs a co-op bakery, a computer lab, a sewing lab and a cosmetology school to teach people job skills. The parish also maintains four nutritional and education centers for the poorest of poor children. And the parish works with communities to build latrines, to bring water to villages and to replace banana frond roofs with tin ones. In each of these endeavors, the parish members contribute, by staffing the children centers, digging their latrine's hole, digging trenches and laying pipe for a water system, and building tin roofs to replace the old. In those cases where the parish member is



disabled, the community works together to provide them with what they need. Father Juan Manuel is pictured above showing us a latrine. It made me proud to be Catholic, and inspired me to give as generously as the members of this large but poor parish in the Caribbean.

In faith, Ellen Brostrom, Lumen Christi parish member

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### Prayer of La Sagrada Familia

God of all people  
who blesses us wherever we are  
with the wealth of the land you created;  
with the water that nourishes our fields.  
You bless us, especially  
with generous brothers and sisters  
in whom we see your face.  
  
We give you thanks for these many years  
of mutual care and support  
between these two sister churches:  
Sagrada Familia parish and the  
Archdiocese of Milwaukee.  
We have grown in this embrace  
that we gave each other so many years ago.  
  
Bless this relationship  
and help us always serve without condition  
those who need it most,  
*Amen!*



## Creating Awareness for a Culture of Cleaning

### A Youth Project of La Sagrada Familia Parish

Through a grant from the McGinnity Family Foundation the youth of the parish were able to create awareness among the people of Sabana Yegua about the importance of cleaning up and collecting the garbage. Their goal was to promote this awareness with a series of ads and also putting garbage containers in strategic places of the town.

In February, they started with an ad encouraging people to use the garbage containers and picking up the garbage. In March, with the support of the McGinnity Family Foundation, they purchased 50 garbage containers and placed on them stickers with the logo of the parish and the slogan of the campaign "*Creando cultura de limpieza*" [Creating a culture of clean].

They also ordered 40 T-shirts for the youth involved in this initiative. On March 13, they organized a day in which 15 youth members of the parish participated in the distribution and location of the containers in strategic areas of the community .

Special thanks to the McGinnity Family Foundation for awarding the \$1000 to make this project a reality.

The youth of the parish, the local government and the parish all worked together to achieve the main goal of the campaign: creating awareness for a culture of cleaning in Sabana Yegua and the communities around it.

[More photos are on the following page]



Fr. Esteban, parish members, and parish youth involved in the project.



The mayor of El Ganadero and the citizens who will watch over the garbage container.



Youth group participants preparing for delivery of a garbage bin

## Creating Awareness for a Culture of Cleaning A Youth Project of La Sagrada Familia Parish

[Continued from the previous page]



Fr. Juan Manuel meets with Tom McGinnity, of the McGinnity Foundation, to discuss the process of evaluation and project expansion.

Fr. Juan Manuel explains the *Culture of Clean Project* to Antoinette Mensah, Director of World Mission Ministries, during a recent visit.



On March 12, 2015, Fr. Juan Manuel and Antoinette Mensah joined other McGinnity Foundation recipients to share their projects and report on progress. Fr. Juan Manuel presented the project to those gathered.

