



Through Faith and Action

Faith Transcends

WRITTEN BY SUSAN KNUTSON



Fr. Tonny OFM Cap and Susan Knutson visiting Bruna, a 110-year-old sick woman, to anoint and pray with her

In the fall of 2022, my life took a dramatic turn when my father passed away. His death marked not just an end, but also the beginning of a new chapter in my life. It was a moment that propelled my heart to search for deeper meaning and connection.

This quest led me on an epic physical and spiritual journey. My first stop was Uganda, where I witnessed the incredible work of Capuchin priests aiding those in the most desperate circumstances. I encountered a people rich in faith and spirit, and seeing poverty in its rawest form was both humbling and eye-opening, revealing the resilience of those living in extreme hardship.

A few months later, I embarked on a three-week voyage to the vibrant tapestry of India. Again, under the care of Capuchin priests, I witnessed their mission to bring the love of Christ to people of all faiths. In my final week, I worked with the Missionaries of Charity,

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A young girl in Uganda learns sewing skills in vocational training program



Class of students at the Capuchin-run St. Felix Nursery School in Kabbega, Uganda



Susan Knutson and the Capuchins in Arua, Uganda

living and serving in the footsteps of Mother Teresa. It was inspiring to see how both the Capuchins and the Missionaries of Charity embody the Beatitudes daily, dedicating themselves to seeking out and helping the most destitute.

In June, I returned to Uganda and joined over 4 million Christians for the Uganda Martyrs Day celebrations. At the Martyrs Day Mass on June 3, amidst 500,000 believers, I witnessed nearly a thousand priests clad in blood-red robes, symbolizing the martyrs' sacrifice. As the priests moved to distribute the Eucharist, a sea of crimson swept through the crowd. The sheer magnitude of this gathering left me awestruck.

These experiences illuminated the path my life is meant to follow. Despite vast cultural differences and language barriers, I felt a deep connection through the Catholic faith and the Eucharist. The Mass, serving as a unifying force across diverse communities, and the power of prayer underscored our shared humanity, reinforcing the notion that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. These beautiful encounters have sparked a profound conversion within me, significantly deepening my faith.

Faith transcends borders, language, and culture, serving as a universal bridge that unites hearts and minds across the globe. In Jesus' name, we become part of a vast network of believers, bound together by our shared faith. This connection through Christ is profound and transformative, forging bonds stronger than any worldly division. We may come from different backgrounds, speak different languages, and live vastly different lives, but through faith, these differences dissolve. We stand as one body united in Christ.

This spiritual unity not only uplifts us but also empowers us to reach out in love and compassion to those around us. We are all called to serve and support one another, reflecting the boundless love of Christ in our actions. In this exchange, we not only give love but also receive it, often finding that what we receive back is far greater than what we can ever give. My encounters over the past year have made me realize that life isn't defined by what we have but by who we serve. This realization inspired me to establish My Father's Wish, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving Christ through aiding the impoverished. By exemplifying Jesus' love and compassion, we seek to educate individuals and communities about sustainable solutions, equipping them with skills that will help them earn a sustainable income, fostering lasting change, and enabling them to live independently while enjoying a better quality of life.

Please visit www.myfatherswish.com to learn more about our mission.



Encounters Each Day

WRITTEN BY SEMINARIAN, ANDREW SMITH

I didn't know what to expect after stepping off the plane in Santo Domingo. We got our bags and walked out of customs into a crowd of Dominicans speaking Spanish and I thought, "How are we gonna find our ride?" Luckily, before I knew it, Fr. Thomas approached me and asked, "Milwaukee?" I knew from that moment on the Lord's hand would guide us safely through this adventure! As always, God makes everything work for those who trust!

Coming into the trip I knew we would be living poor among the poor. Attempting to live like the locals became a beautiful way to enter into life in the Dominican Republic. The time bore fruit in providing a valuable insight into what a small area of the Universal Church looks like outside of our own Local Church in Milwaukee.

Amazingly, the less you have (material possessions and plans) the more free you become to trust in God's plan and live presently with the people around you. We found ourselves exchanging "Buenos dias" with the locals while walking to the parish, La Sagrada

Familia, in Sabana Yegua every morning. From the start we felt a connection with the people of the Dominican Republic even with a language barrier.

This continued to be the case as we worked at the parish's recycling plant, dug a latrine for a family, and played baseball with the children of the town! The Holy Spirit always enriches our relationships beyond what we think is possible!

In talking with many people from La Sagrada Familia to the many other small rural chapels, we found a deep faith in the Dominican people. Even amidst the locals on the streets in Sabana Yegua, our departure saying of "Dios te bendiga" (God bless you) would nearly always be received by youngsters playing or adults sitting in lawn chairs with a response: "Amen, amen!" The overall belief in God as a society seemed very strong, which refreshed us seminarians as our culture in the United States grows increasingly more atheistic. Despite the strength of a general belief in God, the Catholic Church has been struggling due to a lack of priests in the area for hundreds of years. What a

gift to see the Catholic faith survive a long period of time without shepherds! The sheep clearly yearn for shepherds!

It was beautiful to witness the missionary work of the Milwaukee priests devoting their lives to the Dominican people at La Sagrada Familia and creating a clear difference of the local culture. So much that is good in Sabana Yegua started and is supported by the La Sagrada Familia parish, from classes for women to learn textile work or hair salon techniques to establishing a pharmacy and mini medical clinic! Praise God for the gift of zeal of the Catholic Church to serve the incarnational needs of people!

Some of the most valuable time came from conversations with Fr. Javier and Fr. Thomas, the two Archdiocesan priests at La Sagrada Familia, about how to meet people where they are at in the culture of the Dominican Republic while watering the people with the life-giving water that flows from the everlasting reserve of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness the Catholic Church offers to all Her children.

There is a dynamic relationship between the Church and Her flock. After Mass in the remote chapels, we witnessed the watering of the flock in the generosity of time from the priests and generosity of hospitality from the parishioners.

Constantly we received coffee or yuca or candy from people that seemed to have barely enough to eat for themselves. The generosity of the people pierced our hearts with their deep love for us, which reciprocally intensified our love for the people and country. Love flourishes in the small encounters we have each day! Fr. Javier and Fr. Thomas engaged the parishioners with hearts on fire with love of Jesus Christ which became the best “class” of the entire trip.

Reflecting upon our trip brings much joy to my own heart. It amazes me to see how much goodness can come from a small trip to another corner of God’s creation in the world! I firmly believe every person capable of giving of themselves to a mission will spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and will receive even more from the people of the mission! Praise be to Jesus Christ!



Looking to visit La Sagrada Familia?

Join us for the Lenten Retreat!

April 8-15, 2025

Encounter our brothers and sisters in faith, learn about the various ministry initiatives of the parish, and become immersed in the Dominican culture!

More details to come.

Foundation for Children in Need

Tom Chitta and Geetha Yeruva established a not-for-profit called Foundation for Children in Need (FCN) in 2002. FCN is making significant strides as they address the critical needs being faced by communities in rural India. By focusing on women's development, medical care, and health education, they are targeting fundamental areas that affect the lives of children, college students, and elderly individuals.

One of the initiatives carried out by FCN is assisting children born with cleft lip or cleft palate. These conditions, stemming from incomplete development of facial tissue structures, can pose challenges for affected children, as the upper lip or roof of the mouth is left with a slit or an opening. The difficulties that occur include, but are not limited to, dental problems, feeding difficulties, and speech impairment. It is crucial that the children are treated before they turn one, as this maximizes the chances of favorable surgical outcomes.

Thank you to Tom and Geetha for answering God's call as they serve those they encounter with God's love outpouring from their hearts. To learn more about Foundation for Children in Need, please visit <https://fcn-usa.org/index.php>.



Geetha with the children who are served by Foundation for Children in Need

FCN has coordinated 2,000 free Cleft Lip and Cleft Palate surgeries to the needy children in the past 9 years.

Upcoming Opportunities



ALL ARE WELCOME

October 20, 2024

St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church
128 W Burleigh St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Celebrating God's Global Mission through scripture, music, song and dance.

Registration information to come at a later date.

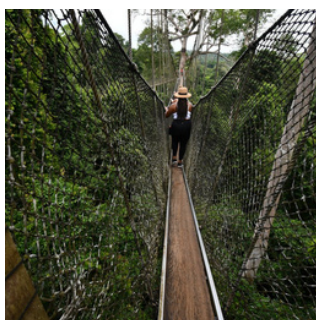


LENTEN RETREAT to LA

SAGRADA FAMILIA

April 8-15, 2025

In preparation of Holy Week, you will have the opportunity to experience Palm Sunday with the Archdiocese of Milwaukee's sister parish, La Sagrada Familia in the Dominican Republic. Encounter our brothers and sisters in faith, learn about the initiatives of the parish, and more!



SANKOFA to Ghana, West Africa

August 7-22, 2025

Appreciate the rich history and culture of Ghana, West Africa, as you learn and experience the resilience of the human spirit from enslavement to modern times.



JUBILEE OF MISSION

October 13-21, 2025

Explore the religious and historical sites that are the foundations for our call to Mission. The pilgrimage will include a visit to the Vatican and to the birthplaces of St. Francis of Assisi and Carlo Acutis (who will be the first millennial saint in line for canonization) during the Jubilee Year of Mission.

Welcome, Angela!



Angela Bonnell *Accountant*

We warmly welcome Angela Bonnell to our team! Angela is a mother to four-year-old son, Gabriel. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, gardening, and listening to live music. We are thankful that Angela has joined our team!

Donate to the Missions

Office for World Mission



tinyurl.com/owmdonation

Society for the Propagation of the Faith



tinyurl.com/spofdonation

La Sagrada Familia



tinyurl.com/lbfdonationpage

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