

Tess

Juarez, Mexico 2000

God. I see him everywhere. In the faces of the Mexican children and faces of the St. Julie's youth. We all experienced so much during this week. We went through a culture shock and came out with a new understanding and appreciation for the country below us. We all made new friends, strengthened bonds with old friends and had the time of our lives. Interacting with the children at kids club was both challenging and exciting. The language barrier made things difficult, but also made me want to study Spanish more. Seeing the poverty in Mexico gave us all a better appreciation for the things we have and our lives in the United States. It also made us realize how bad people were living just over the border from our prosperous country. It makes life seem unfair since most of these people work so hard for the little they have. Although they have very little, they are very happy with what they have and thank God for it everyday. This truly was the greatest experience of my life and I will never forget it!

Mexico 2006

The bus ride was a journey in itself but once we got to Mexico it was a whole new journey. Just entering the city of Juarez was a new site for us. We were there for like 5 minutes and already had the message put through our heads that we should be a lot more grateful for what we have.

Learning to live the style the civilians of Juarez was another new thing for us. Most of the people in the Village were glad that we were there to help. We had to learn how to be a part of their community by dressing according to the way they dress. There was a man at my work site who was a pretty funny guy that helped us out building the house. The daily soccer games with the kids were a way to bond with the community. They showed a warm welcome.

We went to a homeless shelter and visited the kids that lived there. We cleaned the grounds of the homeless shelter to keep it nice and clean. Towards the end of the week we went to the church right in our neighborhood. The songs were sung in fast beat Spanish, which made it fun. The pastor was telling us how happy they are that we were doing this for his community.

Joe Rubino

Over the last four years I've found that one of my passions is service. The mission trip I took to Juarez, Mexico is a great example of this. Having gone on a mission trip last year Even though I had gone to Cairo I honestly still I had no idea what to really expect; Mexico would be a whole new ballgame. From the start I decided to hold a positive attitude through out the trip no matter what; however, once we arrived, I found it once as difficult as I had thought. The sun, the heat, waking up in puddle of sweat, and trying to stay hydrated while you do concrete work would put a strain on any one. Yet in the end, even though you go into this type of thing, thinking "I'm going to help these people", you come out saying, "They've helped me and I feel God's presence"

But why? Juarez is just a place right? And a place with so very little. How then can I say I experienced God? Well Maybe it was because there, Mexico, isolated from most of my usual distractions, cell phones, computers, tv's, -- everything that comes with an everyday teenage life in a U.S. suburb—you are forced to interact with people, and there is on place I saw the power of God. TnT, teens need togetherness, is a very unique because it brings together people of all ages. The most obvious is forcing sometimes unwilling parents to recognize that we as teenagers aren't just degenerates. But among teens, it brings together people that usually wouldn't be around each other weather because of age, grade, status, or likes/dislikes.

On the trip we where divided into two groups that would switch jobs have way through the week. In the kids club we ran, I saw my faith in the smiling eyes of the children. Most of the young kids we worked with spoke little to no English and came from the toughest part of Juarez where both parents worked, kids club offered these kids

and parents a safe place where kids could be kids, if only for a few hours. Before Mexico, I never would have realized the power of something as simple as a piggy-back ride or playing soccer. Every time you saw that you were responsible for a smile, even a small smile, you felt a sense of accomplishment.

As demanding as kids club was mentally, the working group was physically. The working group worked on setting up the foundation and concrete work for a house. The jobs varied from mixing cement and mortar, to laying bricks, or breaking the hard dry ground. I didn't realize till after I had returned home just how hard the work group must have been. Working outside in the 115 plus heat in a shadeless desert didn't seem to faze me, and I honestly could have done it the entire week. I've thought why that was a lot since those days, and the only explanation I have is this: When people count on you to help them with their physical and emotional needs, everything is more intense, because it's another set of expectations you have to live up to, and through the power of the holy spirit I/we were granted the strength and energy to do so.

The last place I saw God was completely unique for me and one other person on the trip. This was the first real time I had been to Mexico, a Mexico that wasn't an American tourist loving fun party site. You see my mother is Mexican and in a small town in Mexico. So to catch a glimpse into her early life, and some of my family's past had a huge impact on me. Not only that but communicating w/ the children there was amazing. My Spanish here may be AP High school credit worthy, but there, being put to use, it was like I had never really spoken to its full potential before.

I'll never forget the experience I had in Mexico and I look forward to maybe some day returning as a chaperon.

Adam Miranda

Kathleen O'Donnell
Mexico 2006

This trip to Mexico was by far one of the best experiences of my life. Even now, I can still feel its effects. The children were unforgettable. It was amazing how language was not a barrier for them. All they needed was someone with a big heart and a lot of energy. It was impossible not to love them. Those kids made it so obvious that nobody needs a computer or digital cameras or anything like that to be happy; being with the ones you love is what is truly important. I cannot help but smile to think about the time we spent at Kid's Club and with the children at the work site.

The trip also cemented in my mind the amount of poverty some people live with. There is so much room for change and improvement in the world, it would be a shame not to do what we can to help. Everything makes a difference, so do what you can. I am currently looking into all of the different mission trips that are run through Marquette. It's impossible to experience a place like Juarez and not want to continue helping people out wherever and however you can.

Mexico was a unique experience for me for a couple of reasons. First, many of us have kept in close contact with the Youthworks staff. They were amazing in Mexico, and are still just as fun and insightful now that we are all back in our normal situations. I go to school with Bonnie, and it's been great to be able to see her. For the other trips, we made friends with the staff but soon forgot about them. This year was different and so much better. I am so thankful we are still in contact with them, and that I can consider them friends. Secondly, the fact that this was my senior trip put a slightly different spin on everything. I tried to take everything in slowly and everything had a sort of bittersweet element to it. It was an amazing experience, but a saddening one because I won't get the chance to do this again with many of these amazing people. On that note, I hope everyone does the young adult mission trips! In short though, I cannot thank everyone enough for going on this trip and helping to make our week in Juarez unforgettable.

Juarez, Mexico 2006 Mission Trip Reflection

If someone were to ask me to sum up my mission trip to Mexico in one word, I would tell them that picking just one word is impossible. Mexico impacted my life in so many different ways.

I was picturing kid's club to be similar to how it was in North Carolina. But within the first five minutes, I realized how wrong I was. The amount of kids that showed up blew my mind. There were at least 30 kids present both days I was there, and they were thrilled to be there. Not being able to understand what they were saying was difficult at times, but we were still able to "hang out" and have a great time. The ways that they tried to communicate with us were awesome, and it was exciting when they tried to teach me Spanish. It shocked me to see how excited these kids were just to play soccer, or to blow bubbles. The smiles that spread across their face when we were playing soccer or volleyball were really touching. I was also surprised at how well behaved they were when it came time to pay attention to our skits and memory verses etc. They sat quietly and did as they were told. It made me think, and I realized that these kids are just happy to be alive. They are happy and satisfied with the little things in life that really matter.

I came to the conclusion that in the society we were raised in, we are used to always having the newest and best version of anything that is "popular", whether it be an iPod, a car, or a house. We have adopted a bad habit of trying to "beat-out" people. And after we get that "popular" item, we brag about it, until a better version comes out, and then we buy that. The kids showed me that in the US we spend so much time wanting, we never really spend any time being thankful for what we have. When I got home, I decided that I wasn't going to buy anything unless it was completely necessary, such as food or water. To this day, I haven't bought a thing, and it has showed me a whole new outlook on life. I've spent a lot more time with my family and friends, and I realize that they are the most important gift that I could ever ask for. You can always buy a new car, but you can't buy a new family. I wish there was a way that I could thank the kids in Mexico for teaching me the most important lesson that I will ever learn.

I really had no idea what to expect when I went to my worksite. I was at the far away site in Anapra. Alone, the 20 minute drive to the site

impacted me. To see that such a poor and poverty stricken town could have one of the most beautiful mountain ranges I've seen astounded me. And then we got to the site, and the view was even better. The town around me was in horrendous conditions. Houses didn't have doors and windows, the fences were made of crates, the animals on our site had ticks, the bathroom was a single hole in the ground surrounded by wood that was the wall, and the roads in the neighborhood were made of dirt. And yet, in the middle of this horrifying town, you could see for hundreds of miles. You could see New Mexico, Mexico, and the US. You could also see the crucifix on top of the tallest peak. It was the most gorgeous view that I have ever seen. It was like time stood still, and you got the opportunity to realize how blessed you truly were.

When we first got there, it was kind of awkward because it felt like the Pastor, Octavio, and Jose didn't want us there. So, we started mixing mortar, and within an hour, when they saw that we were there to help, we were laying cinder blocks, and helping build a home for a family that was in need. They really made us feel like we were doing a great job. I worked on a wall with Wendy and Jose. In one day, we built an entire wall, and started on another one. Jose was so patient with us. He never got mad or frustrated, and laughed and joked with us like we were his own sisters. He was so friendly. To see that a guy who didn't know anything about us could welcome us so warmly really astonished me. We got along so well, and built a great relationship in two days. These people showed me that beauty truthfully lies in the eye of the beholder. These people are the most miraculous people I've ever met. They didn't judge us. They loved us for who we were and what we were doing.

At the work site I got the opportunity to meet 3 kids, and the family living next door. Omar and Lupe (2 youngest kids) were always outside wanting to play with us. They were constantly smiling and laughing with us. They were the cutest little kids I've ever seen, and I got the chance to have a relationship with them. The older boy, Edgar, was always willing to help out in any way he could. He mixed mortar and laid blocks. To see these people be so welcoming to complete strangers blew me away. They were so open to new things. I wish that people in the US could see that. If everyone in the world would take time out of their hectic lives to get to know a complete stranger, I think that this world could be a better place. Maybe there wouldn't be so much violence if people didn't judge, and didn't jump to conclusions the first time they saw you.

The people on worksite, especially the pastor, taught me the true meaning of faith. Through heat, lack of water, sweat, and hard work, they strived on until their job was done. They put faith in God to watch over them and keep them safe while building. They put faith in God to keep the family that they are building the house for healthy. They put faith in God to survive every day. They build houses for people who really need it. You don't need to be part of the church, and that caught me off guard. They were building a house for someone who stole from his church. They put faith in God, and whatever direction they are pointed in, they go. Their entire life is faith.

Everywhere we were, we had people honking, waving, and thanking us for what we were doing. I felt like no matter what these people were put through, they always looked toward God and trusted in him, and in the long run, it all turned out okay. No matter how bad it gets, they know it will always get better. They put trust and faith in God and in each other, and that is something that we unfortunately lack. They always look at the positive side of a situation. Those are very important characteristics that I think everyone should have, and characteristics that I wish I possessed. My main goal is to try and do that every day. When I get mad, I am going to think about Mexico and what these people taught me. The trip was the most memorable experience that I've ever been put through, and I thank God for it everyday. It taught me so much about life and living. I pray to God that these people never lose their faith, and that they always look to the good. Because no matter how bad it gets, if you stick together and have faith, you can get through anything.

Ellie Maglia
July 30, 2006

Mission Trip Reflection

This past mission trip to Juarez, Mexico was my fourth. It was also my second time returning to this site in Juarez. Before we even stepped onto the bus I was so excited, so ready for the experience, and hoping that this trip would be as good as the last one. I must say that I was very surprised to find that my 2006 mission trip to Juarez blew every other mission trip out of the water.

One of my favorite parts about mission trips is the long bus ride where we all get to know each other. Everyone spent time learning names, personalities, and knocking down barriers. I am so proud of our group for not creating cliques and getting to know everyone throughout the whole week. We always included everyone in our soccer games, discussions, and goofing around. Even at night when "sleeping" in the bunks we managed to include the other rooms in our fun! On this particular mission trip we also made a very strong connection with the Youthworks staff. We laughed with them, cried with them, learned from them, prayed with them, talked with them, and then laughed a lot more. I have never had a staff who was so sincerely interested in us teens and so willing to get to know us and have some fun. They also taught us a lot about the community and they were willing to share their personal life to better our experiences. I met and became closer to so many awesome people while in Mexico and I will never forget them!

Worksite and kids club were also a fantastic experience for me as well. This year my work group was being helped by a few community members. They were all so patient and so appreciative of our help. Never once did they rudely take a tool from us and take over the job. They constantly offered advice and encouragement! Another awesome thing about worksite was that my particular group actually started a project. Instead of picking up where another group left off, we started digging the foundation of a house right in the middle of nowhere. It was awesome to see nothing transform into a solid, completed foundation after only two days of sweat, digging, cement mixing, and hard work! Kids club was a greater experience for me this year because I truly tried to connect with the kids. Although I speak almost no Spanish, I spoke to the kids with confidence and successfully communicated enough to help them with crafts, make them giggle, and play some fun games. It was truly amazing to goof and play with kids that have so little, but are still so happy in life!

The final and most memorable part about my trip to Mexico was the community members. Unlike my last trip to Juarez, the first night we were introduced to several members of the church. We met whose houses we were building, who would be helping us on worksite, whose kids we were playing with, and who was making the awesome food! Throughout the week we were constantly in contact with the community. They joked and laughed with us on worksite, they stopped by to school us in soccer, they cooked for us occasionally, and one man even gave a witness. Even though these people were essentially complete strangers, they took us in and made us feel welcomed. This connection with the community made my trip one that I will never forget! They prayed for us, taught us, and laughed with us! These people who live among garbage and most of whom have just gotten running water treated us with more kindness and love than any people I have ever met. This reminds us that you can't judge people or look down upon them because of their material belongings or lack thereof. The people I met in Mexico will live with me for the rest of my life.

This reflection does not do the 2006 mission trip to Juarez, Mexico justice. Every day was a new and inspiring experience that one must experience to understand. A smile, a laugh, finally understanding what a person is trying to tell you, a rain shower in the evening, a dusty soccer game, an ice cold coke, a mountain hike, horchata, jumping through a hula hoop... everything I encountered changed my life for the best. I was able to have so much fun with my friends, the Youthworks staff, and most importantly the community simply by opening up my heart and coming with an opened mind. Words cannot describe how amazing this trip was and my countless stories and memories of the trip won't help to describe it either, but as my new found friend Kerry Nolan said every evening in Mexico, "This was the best day of my life!"

Ray Stone
Mission trip 2006
Juarez, Mexico

This being my second mission trip I kinda thought I knew what to expect, but everybody said Mexico is different. And I must admit every single one of them was right. There is just no other experience in my life that I can compare it to. It was just so amazing to see how much the people down there respected what they had, unlike here where I get something new and am bored with it within a week. Just simply kicking a ball back and forth or a jump rope would keep the kids entertained for hours. Everybody worked so hard for what they had as well. What is considered lazy for them is what most of us would consider an average day of work. All in all it was a very humbling experience. I went in with a view of it just being a crappy place that was poor and rundown. And by the end of the trip I had fallen in love with it. I remember while we were in Texas waiting to cross the border I thought that it was really poor and rundown there, but when we were coming home and in the exact same place it appeared to me as a rich neighborhood and I couldn't believe that I ever thought of it as being poor. Being in Mexico really showed me how much I truly have and should never not be thankful for it again. Everybody always seems so shocked when I tell them what it was like down there, but I just shrug and say it is the best place I have ever been.

Why would you want to go on a mission trip to Juarez, Mexico instead of going with the rest of your family to Orlando, Florida?

No, it wasn't the 30 something hour bus ride to Mexico and then back to Tinley. Nope, it wasn't the hot days that ran between 106 and 112 degrees. Although some of the kids made a game out of not being able to shower until Thursday, that didn't do it for me either. It certainly wasn't the opportunity to sleep on foam pieces laid on top of the wood slats with no relief from the heat during the night.

What did it for me was sharing an adventure in life with my daughter. On our trip I was able to learn more about her relationships as she relates to her peers. I found a loving, caring and mature young lady that everyone seems to enjoy. Adults as well as the teenagers always had something kind to say about her and their interactions with her spoke even louder than their words. It was reassuring to see that she knows how to make a difference in the lives of others.

Building relationships was another inspiring reason to be on this trip. Just as I shared the adventure with my own daughter I was also able to share the experience with 30 something other teens. Sometimes I was a parent, sometimes I was a friend and sometimes I was a spiritual leader. The kids always worked hard. They were given a job and they would work hard until it was done. It was impressive to watch them look after each other as they relieved each other from the labor intense work days. I was amazed to observe them accept everyone's differences and limitations. I was wowed by their drive to get work done with a smile and even sometimes a song! Whether it was learning to sing in Spanish with the community children, building homes, or sharing our faith, we did it together, as a team.

Most importantly, it was about sharing wisdom and faith with young adults. For some adults this would be the most difficult part of a mission trip but I would tell them try it, especially with these teens...you'll like it! There is nothing more rewarding than helping young people find their way through life's journey. I can't think of anything more gratifying than knowing you may have helped a person find something new about them. It is so satisfying knowing that maybe you made a difference in somebody's life if even for just a moment.

It was not a mistake to go on the mission trip in Juarez, Mexico instead of attending a luxury, bonus family vacation in Orlando, Florida. It was a pleasure to be with such devoted adults and caring people. It was an honor to work beside such determined teens. It is a relief to know there are many young teens that are trying to do God's work through their feet, hands, hearts and minds.

Respectfully and sincerely, Nancy Harmening

Mexico helped me to realize important facts towards my life. Facts that include the importance of taking things for granted.

I often forget that I alone have more technology in my room, than a third-world country has in their house.

Despite the fact that they live in poverty, they are still very much proud of that little things they have. They have alot of faith in whatever they do, and that alone keeps them happy.

I was very proud and happy to be a part of the mission trip to Mexico in 2006.

Freddie Izguerra

Reflection

Jim Willis

Mexico was an experience of a lifetime. I got to see what life is really like in a third world country & it opened my eyes. I now know to never take anything for granted. That night on the mountain looking over the city seeing how much these people suffer is truly eye opening, but to them it's like living in Buckingham palace it's every thing they have. At work site knowing that you are going to make someones life so much better feels great. I had a great time in Mexico & it changed my life.

There are no words sufficient in describing the mission trip to Juarez, Mexico. The experience as a whole was the most challenging excursion I have ever undertaken. It was not only physically challenging, as shoveling cement, gravel, and sand in 115 degree heat for eight hours consumed every ounce of my energy, but seeing innocent children running around in this impoverished place was more than I could take mentally.

When we crossed the border into Juarez, the change in living conditions was apparent immediately. Every space on a concrete wall that once was a clean slate became a home for graffiti. It was everywhere, as if it had a life of its own, a disease ravishing this land. And I had a moment of clarity...we were no longer in the land of opportunity and freedom; we were in a new land where the anthem contained words like struggle, pain, and hunger. Even in the mission compound set behind an iron gate, we slept on plywood in 100 degree heat. Since it was almost impossible to sleep through the night, I would lay there and contemplate the fact that people live like this every day. We were coming to do God's work and then going home to our comfortable air conditioned 3 bedroom homes, and these people would be left behind to stay in this poverty indefinitely. How do the words justice and faith even exist in their language?

The work site was where I learned the most...not about building a home, but about the Mexican people, both mission workers who build homes for people day in and day out, and the people of Mexico who inhabit these homes. Even with an intense language barrier (as I spoke no Spanish and Antonio spoke no English), we were able to communicate about one thing: how to build this home so two people could live better lives. The home that we were building (a 10 x 14 cinder block shelter) was for a woman who makes a living through prostitution and a man who was caught stealing sound equipment from the church. But the church in Mexico believes strongly in showing Jesus exists through acts, which is why Antonio, Juan, and Eileen build homes every day in Juarez with no plans of leaving...so there we were, building a home for someone who would have robbed a poor church if he had not been caught. And the view from the work site speaks for why people pillage and steal in this place. The edge of the site looks like a garbage dump. Trash covers the area, as if it had fallen from the sky like rain drops. It is a man made land fill, and homes are scattered among the filth. Yet, in the distance is the city of El Paso. I could see it clearly every day: paved roads, shiny sky scrapers, opportunity. It was like the Land of Oz, the emerald city, and I finally understood why people would do whatever they could to cross the borders into America, a place I take for granted every day.

Kids club held a different kind of challenge for me. Since I am a teacher, it came with a deep sadness. These kids only have to go to school until sixth grade (if their parents can afford to buy uniforms and send them), but even after that education, most of them can not read or write well. Their innocence set against such a harsh background was the ultimate dichotomy, and it was very difficult to witness. But even amongst the struggle of life, I saw these kids smile time and time again. I watched them beaming with pride as they took their homemade t-shirt home, and I saw the excitement when they wore that very same t-shirt to kid's club the next day. They were proud of themselves and I could not have felt more privileged then to be in Juarez and witness those moments.

Upon first arriving in Juarez, I questioned the existence of God in this place. How could the Lord let some people suffer so? How could He put children in such a horrible place and let them grow up, some never knowing anything different? Yet, after my experience and reflection of this trip, I have never experienced God in a more clear sense. I saw him working through Antonio, Juan, Eileen, the Pastor, the Youthworks leaders, and every other member of that St. Julie's Mexico mission team that tried to make a difference. God may not be able to control all things because He gave humans free will, but He can send his messengers to begin to ratify those problems. I saw his messengers and angels in the flesh in Juarez, and I can truly say that I will never be the same.

7/29/06

Anna Meyers

Several years ago I went on a 4 night cruise. What a decadent experience! We were spoiled rotten! Delicious food available 24/7, waiters hovering around for our every need, drinks by the pool with nothing more than lifting a finger. Each evening the towels and pillows in our room were arranged to look like a stingray, the Eiffel Tower, etc. It was like living in another world. For weeks afterward I would look at my watch and think, "What would I be doing on the cruise ship?"

When we returned from Juarez this year, I found myself doing the same thing. This was my 3rd trip to that site; yet, more than ever before I kept doing the same thing. I'd check the time then wonder if they were putting the roof on the house we built, or who showed up for Kids Club, or what songs were being sung for devotionals...I could take myself back so easily! Why, after so many mission trips, was I so consumed?

It took time to discover the answer, and it is still unfolding. I am so touched by the joy of the Mexican people at site 2. Most in the community do not have flushing toilets. Yet they have a joyful satisfied way about them. They are not focused on "getting ahead." They are what I aspire to be: concerned first and foremost with helping others—not with their clothes or furnishings. It is a humble peaceful life. God is present in their actions; in the very material of their being. The complications of societal pressures, of "keeping up with the Jones", of the "politics" I experience at home (at work!) are gone.

Yes, as always, I am grateful for what I have and do not take it for granted. But today, this time, the yearning runs deep. What is going on, right now, at site #2? Who is helping? Most importantly, in turn, how can I make a difference? Who can I help today...this time...right now?

Where Did I see God?

- It was in the hearts of every teen, and their willingness to give all they had to God's people.
- It was in the Youthworks Staff that I will never forget and hopefully continue to talk to...a group of people I can call true friends and true inspirations.
- It was in my small group, and their actions on worksite and their interactions with everyone...true works of God
- It was in the voices of our group during Club...
- It was in the chance I had to work side by side with Antonio.
- It was in the Jesus Cross, that Deacon Dad created back in 1999 and gave them as a gift, which still hangs in their church as their centerpiece.
- It was in my new found friendships amongst the group that I will continue to treasure and never lose.
- It was in seeing all of our skills and traits being put to perfect use.
- It was in how I still had to shower using empty water jugs because the boy's showers just lost pressure right before I stepped in to cleanse myself.
- It was in my daily talks/reflections about daily thoughts and events I had with other leaders.
- It was in the sandstorm and its timing with our events...and it was in the rain that followed, and continued to cleanse our hearts.
- It was in Padre and the heart of the community
- It was in the endless humor.
- It was in the heat.

Do I dare continue? I do!

- It was the bonding we all had.
- It was in being able to capture you on film.
- It was in hearing you speak, or attempt to speak Spanish.
- It was seeing some of the teens and how they have grown since I was still in the group.
- It was on the Hill.
- It was in the Orphanage...

Let's face it...God's Grace was over abundant.

So I saw God... Did you?

Va Con Dios
Gorney

PS. Is it even possible to write out what fills your heart?

JUAREZ MEXICO 2006, WAS AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY, ONE THAT I WILL NEVER FORGET. I THANK GOD FOR TAKING US THERE SO WE CAN ALL SEE HIS GRACE AND GOODNESS WORKING IN EVERYBODY.

EVERY EVENING IN OUR PRAYER SESSION ^{WE} ~~WOULD~~ WOULD SAY "YEA GOD" FOR SOMEONE OR SOMETHING SPECIAL THAT TOUCHED OUR LIVES DURING THE DAY. HERE ARE SOME OF MINE AND THE GROUPS "YEA GOD".

"YEA GOD" FOR ALL THE TEENS WHO SANG, PRAYED, PLAYED AND LAUGHED ON THE 30 HOUR BUS RIDE TO MEXICO (AND BACK).

"YEA GOD" FOR THE PEOPLE OF EL PASO, TEXAS WHO WARMLY GREETED US AT SUNDAY MASS IN THE BEGINNING OF OUR JOURNEY.

"YEA GOD" FOR THE DEDICATED STAFF OF YOUTHWORKS WHO LED AND INSPIRED US IN DAILY PRAYER AND SONG.

"YEA GOD" FOR THE HARD WORK OF ALL THE TEENS AND LEADERS BUILDING HOUSES IN DAILY TEMPERATURES OVER 100 DEGREES.

"YEA GOD" FOR ALL THE TEENS FOR PLAYING SOCCER, DOING CRAFTS, SINGING, ACTING, ETC. AND GIVING ALL THEY HAD WITH THE CHILDREN OF MEXICO.

"YEA GOD" FOR ALL THE SMALL GROUPS AND THEIR LEADERS WHO GAVE 200% ALL DAY, EVERYDAY.

"YEA GOD" FOR THE ICE CREAM SHOP THAT COOLED US OFF AFTER SURVIVING ANOTHER 100 DEGREE DAY.

"YEA GOD" FOR THE PASTOR AND HIS CONGREGATION FOR SHOWING US A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE.

"YEA GOD" FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF JUAREZ FOR ALLOWING US TO WORK, PLAY, PRAY & SING WITH THEM.

"YEA GOD" FOR DEACON ED FOR LEADING AND INSPIRING US ON THIS JOURNEY.

"YEA GOD" FOR HELPING US SURVIVE THE HEAT, NO AIR CONDITIONING, NO SHOWERS, LITTLE SLEEP & LONG BUS RIDES.

"YEA GOD" FOR GIVING EVERYBODY THE ENERGY TO DO YOUR WILL AND TO SHOW YOUR LOVE, ALL WITH ENDLESS ENTHUSIASM; AND GIVE ALL THEY HAD TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO.

"YEA GOD"

LARRY FRAZZINI

Mission Trip to Juarez, Mexico

When I found out that I was going to Mexico on a mission trip, I was completely excited. I had gone on one other mission trip, the year before, to Cairo, Illinois. It was one of the best experiences of my life, and because of that, I knew Mexico was going to be amazing. The week in Juarez taught me a lot about myself. It helped me to appreciate all the things I have that I wouldn't normally notice. Water and electricity were limited, along with many other everyday items that I couldn't imagine living without it. You would think that with limited resources, and not a lot of money, the residents of this city would be angry, or upset, but everyone I saw was very appreciative of everything they had. The whole time I was there I never saw anyone take one thing for granted. When we would be out walking or working people would stop and make sure to say "Thank You" or "Bless You." They made me feel like they completely valued everything I was doing for them. All the work that I did was worth it, because I knew I was helping people who appreciated it. Going to Mexico wasn't just about helping others, the people there did a lot more for me than I could possibly do for them.

Andrew Thomas Wilkerson

Reflection

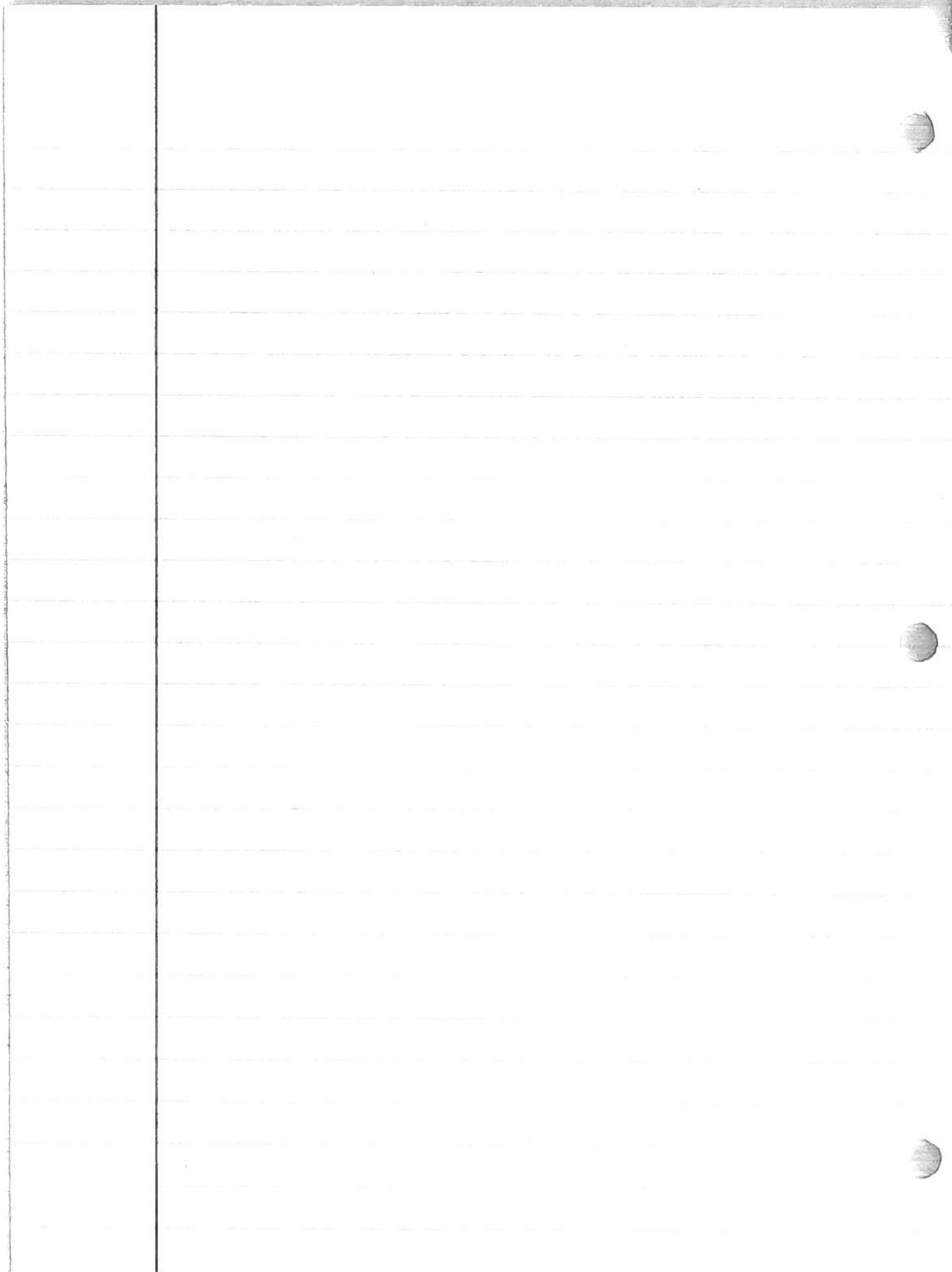
Before
When the missions trip started, I already had preconceived ^{notions about} ~~ideas~~ what it would ~~have been~~ like; I knew what Juarez looked like from the videos and also what missions trips were like having partaken in some already, however, though my preconceptions were ~~wasnt~~ correct, there was no possible way I could have possibly phathomed the vastness of each part of the trip. The first bus ride, whilst expected to be ~~the~~ long & tedious, was different than what I had expected. Though the trip was ~~the~~ long, and sometimes uncomfortable, it was one of the best parts of the ~~weeks~~ week due to the fact that we all had to learn ^{to live} together and adapt to one another ~~or else be with miserable the entire 36 hour trip.~~
However, the bus ride was only a ~~trivial~~ small, trivial part of the missions trip ~~as a whole~~; ^{in its entirety} ~~moreover~~ moreover the city ~~itself~~ city/community itself was enormously eye-opening. Not only did the town have absolutely ~~nothing~~ no money, it also had no hygiene, no fair government, an unequal economy, and only a scratch of government. No matter how many pictures or videos a person has seen of Juarez, the vastness of the poverty and need doesn't appear to them until they are there and see with their own eyes how these people "live", if a person could possibly call it that. But, the idea still consists that

the people are the greatest part of ~~the~~ ^{my} missions trip; whether ~~as~~ friend, co-worker, leader, or ~~inhabitant~~ inhabitant of Juarez, there ~~was~~ ^{is} not one person I ~~can~~ ^{could} possibly say that I don't have a fond memory of ~~work~~ work, fun, or anything I've with. The first would have to be the citizens themselves ~~because~~ because no matter what they are going through, they still had a smile on their faces and would always say "Khalá" "hola". Seriously, despite ~~the~~ ^{how} ~~emerald~~ ^{more fortunate} fortunate we are here in the United States, I would be hard-put if you could, in any major town, ~~find~~ ^{to} receive as many "hello's" and "how are you's" as we did in Mexico. We would ~~be~~ literally be grouped, ~~and~~ sitting on a corner of an intersection and people would honk their horns, wave, and greet us as a part of their own community. Still, no matter how great the people of Juarez were, we would not have been able to do anything without ~~our~~ ^{the} leaders. People like Lydia, Dave, Bonnie, and Tom ~~are~~ truly demonstrate how to lead a Christian life; with their constant ^{unwavering} belief in ^{Jesus Christ} God and their need to ~~spread~~ spread the word of God whilst doing his will on Earth, they are truly servants of God and we should all try to live ~~our~~ live like them. Even our leaders ~~themselves~~ set forth an example on how to live our lives and use them to do God's will. If one looks solely on Mr. Mozia and his dedication to

help those who are unfortunate enough to have possessed almost no earthly possessions. That person would have a perfect example on how to live ^{his own} ~~these~~ ^{life}. Personally, I had much time to get to know him whilst we were fixing the swamp poles, water lines, shower curtains, and at the same work site. His unbelievable care for his family and dedication to hard work is beyond inspiring, and I am glad I got to know ^{the Magdos} ~~him~~ as well as I do. Furthermore, no matter how great the leaders are or the community is, the ^{things} ~~one expects~~ that makes these Mission Trips unforgettable ~~is~~ are the friends you go down with & the friends you make whilst you are down there. I know, I wrote about friendship and the rest of the group in my last reflection, however I find that people you live with and get to know have an unprecedented effect on you, your ~~own~~ heart, and your memories. Very few people can say they went to Mexico to build houses for the poor, but even less can say they went down to Mexico to build houses for the poor and either made or rekindled bonds with 50 friends. I find it an honor to be a part of this ~~amazing~~ amazing group, and to have unforgettable memories with almost every single person. Most people would not be able to comprehend the greatness of playing a game of

soccer, or football, in over 100+ degree weather, but everyone on the missions trip will regard all those games we played in the hot sun as some of the best memories they have ever made. Not just playing games either, the plain conversations we had about anything + everything will remain as vivid in my ~~mind~~ mind as anything else; moreover, one of the fondest memories I ~~had~~ have of Mexico is ~~literally~~ literally sitting on the side of the basketball/soccer ~~court~~ court and watching Abbey ~~try~~ ^{struggle} to remove a rock from a slab of pure concrete. Throughout the trip, the laughs + words shared between ^{the} people of the group and myself will never be forgotten, and even though I still am a bit of an "outsider" in the group, there is barely any time that I actually feel like that. That characteristic of the group is one of the things that makes ~~the~~ the missions trips amazing; seriously, almost any person can go on one and never feel as if they are with strangers. I ~~know~~ ^{remember} that even ~~at~~ ^{on} my first time going to any meeting I felt just as at home as I would have with a group of my own friends. The chemistry and support from each and ~~every~~ every member is beyond amazing, and that alone should be inspiration to live the ~~good~~ ^{fully} life. Moreover, the bonds between people do nothing but

grow during the missions trips. I have never seen any group of teenagers get together and live, worship, and work together as well as St. Julie's TNT does, and I have tremendous pride & thanks just for being able to be a part of it, even ~~for the missions trips~~ if it's just for the missions trip.



Juarez '06

I wasn't sure what to ~~expect~~ ^{expect} on this mission trip even though I went to Laito last year. I wasn't sure what to expect because of the language barrier, and I was also a little scared because of it. But there were a couple of people that were on the trip with us ~~and~~ that were fluent in Spanish, so they were a big help translating for us. ~~and~~ I was amazed at how kind and open hearted the community was, when we were in Laito last year some of the community did not love that we were there and did not appreciate it. But the community in Juarez were very appreciative and showed us that they were. I was also amazed at how happy they were. ~~at~~ Some of them didn't even have running water or electricity, but they were happy for what they had: a roof over their heads, friends, family, and faith. ~~I~~ I had an amazing time in Juarez and these ~~isn't~~ ^{isn't} really any words that I can think of to describe the

experience we had, the memories and friends we made will be there forever. Also I strongly encourage anyone who has ever thought about going on a mission trip to do so when the opportunity presents itself because it may not come along again and it may also ~~change~~ change your life in a ~~small~~ way that cannot occur any other time.

You can ~~also~~ change someone's life in a way that you will never know, and make some great friends and even better memories on the way.

thanks you and God bless

Jay
Kiser

Andrew King
Mexico Reflection

This being my first mission trip it was all kinda surreal how much poverty is all around you. But the ppl's demeanor was better than most people's in amer with a good amount of money. At that kind of poverty is hard to grasp without witnessing it first hand. I would bet at least 60% of the ppl in amer no nothing about that kind of poverty. It was an amazing to me - to help out the community and kinda become apart of it for a short period of time. To be truthful I had mixed feelings about going. I was extremely nervous about not being accepted, but also I knew

that if I didn't go I
might not get a better
chance to help, our
off loan their so
I was going to miss it
~~the~~ I had my time down
their opened up my
eyes to the bigger issues
in the world not just
my own little not having
money for movies and things
I am now so much more
respectful and grateful
for the things I have

Ricky Compton

Mexico was amazing. Before we left I had an idea of what it would look like, but when we arrived I saw only half as bad as I thought it would be. I am so glad I went and was able to help so many people and play games with the kids. Even though I was sick for a couple of days I still had an awesome time with the children. They were all so caring and welcoming even the men we helped on the houses with were welcoming. Even though they tore down ~~the~~ wall we were building to show us how to do it correctly, they didn't tell us we were bad at it they just said that for it to stay strong for many years it had to be done as persise as possible.

One of my favorite activities was playing soccer, because even though they don't have much they live happily with what they do have and that taught me that I should be extremely thankful for what I do have. Also the mass even though it was not a catholic mass it was a lot of fun and meant a lot for me to see that the calibrate for the small things they do have and they care about everyone in their community.

Also they have the best food that there is no doubt it's better than at Borrto Jalisco or El Famous Burrito. This trip made me appreciate everything I have even the small things like water

of air conditioning. I am very glad I went on this trip and it meant so much to me.

Juarez, Mexico 2006.

eyes in so many ways. The way. First thing I notice
~~was~~ ^{was} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~smiles~~ ^{smiles} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~were~~ ^{were} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~most~~ ^{most} ~~beautiful~~ ^{beautiful} ~~things~~ ^{things} ~~I~~ ^I ~~noticed~~ ^{noticed}
people we'd knowled so hard in a bus to show some
compassion! The smiles on their faces were endless, & they
opened our hearts like nothing else could. We were instantly
by welcomed into their foldable but loving community.
It made wanting to give to them that much
easier, with ~~what~~ ^{what} they had, they made us feel
comfortable. ~~What~~ ^{What} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~skills~~ ^{skills} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~they~~ ^{they} ~~possessed~~ ^{possessed}, we
shared. And here we were thinking we could help them.
They truly proved how to love ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~world~~ ^{world}. ~~They~~ ^{They} ~~warned~~ ^{warned}
us a blessing, I ~~learned~~ ^{learned} from ~~God~~ ^{God}. And with the
children know it. Life was not about pointing beams
you hurt yourself & wouldn't finish the soccer game,
or staying mad at a friend who accidentally spilled
your drinks. It was about sharing and giving to
one you were out of the game, & making the bubble
you had left. These children were never upset no long
always happy & always eager to learn & connect
with ~~you~~ ^{you} & ~~for~~ ^{for} ~~what~~ ^{what} I will never
forget the experience I had on one single day
in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~state~~ ^{state} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~Mexico~~ ^{Mexico}, I will
never ~~forget~~ ^{forget} ~~them~~ ^{them}.
I ~~will~~ ^{will} ~~never~~ ^{never} ~~forget~~ ^{forget} ~~them~~ ^{them}.

Building relationships, skills of
cooperation, and so much
more. The NT program helps
to share, it's just way a life-
changing experience.

The day we got to the site
we were at a low a little
nervous to see how the
people would act towards
us. I never even heard out
that they were very welcoming
and extremely grateful to
us.

The next two days was
working at the high camp.
The really opened my
eyes to how much we
take things for granted.
When we were younger, if
you would travel in a hotel
or a hotel stays, most of

We would store it if you
for a couple 1 year. Then
drop it and run the
nearest TV. Kids here would
buy you and over, and
he should buy it for brown.

The next two days I was at
a water table for for from
where we were staying. The
house was about 100 yds
away of our bedroom. The
were building on a
small house for more of the
woman family for sure.
Mostly, we moved water, but
a few of us caught water on
the house. By the time that
two days was up, the house
was almost empty.

On the last day, all of us
were extremely sad for
leave. Some of us because

of the side from the side, but
for the rest part, it was
because of your machine.
And killing in time with
the whole community we
had come for demand.

Quar on November 15th, with them +
a benefit, they just received
of some things and really hope
I get the opportunity for
you to open on a few days
with TNT. It will give you
much to compare what
helped make them things
possible.