



Mission Reflections

CAIRO 2001

Deacon Ed

Cairo – 2011

“...they look but do not see and hear but do not listen or understand....But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. Amen, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it” Mt. 13:13-17

“We always ask...nobody ever listens”. Those were the words that greeted us in Cairo as we opened our trailer to reveal it 1/2 full of donated school supplies, snacks, work site supplies, crafts and clothing that we had brought down in response to their request. We had talked with Mallory, the Youthworks site coordinator, a week earlier and she has shared that Tenisha had a list of items that they needed to support the work that they were doing here in Cairo. We shared the request with the St. Julie community and the trip participants and received an overwhelming response! “Those who have ears, should listen” – you did! You heard the message of Jesus as Mathew shared with us and you responded.

It didn't stop there, this was only the beginning.

The community of Cairo is a proud community, suffering from economic hardship and environmental challenges. As a result the town has fallen on hard times over the years. The downward spiral was evident in past trips to Cairo but this time was different. This time there was a sense of hope and an inkling of change. This time it “felt” different, from the joy at the Kids Club to the hope during the prayer walk, from the gratitude at the work sites to the sense of community at the cook out it was a different Cairo from the 3 previous trips.

I've been reflecting since we've been back, trying to understand why... I believe it's as simple as the insight Mathew shares with us... “blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear”. You saw the need and heard the message from Jesus and you responded.

You responded in ways too numerous to count:

From your decision to give up a week of vacation to serve
From your willingness to welcome your peers, friends and first time friends alike on the trip
From the minute you got out of the vans and opened yourselves up to our friends from Indiana
From the endless “piggy-back” rides for the children at Kids Club
From the patients you showed at the craft and reading stations
From the smiles you put on the faces of the children as they did your hair
From the endless effort you put forth on the work site to make someones home more livable
From the energy you showed, an energy that never quit, as you bonded with the teens at OSC
From the compassion you showed for your new friends at DayStar and the nursing home
From the understanding and empathy you felt on the prayer walk
From the sheer joy you expressed at the prayer service
From the ability you showed, helping to pull the whole town together at the cook out
From the incredible bonding, the forming of a “family” of support for one another on Thursday night
From the memories, stories and promises you brought back as you evangelize in His name

From the Love you showed to the community of Cairo
From the hearts you touched
From the lives you've changed

you have shown us that you truly have eyes that see his path and ears that hear his message.

What an incredible trip – God Bless

Deacon Ed

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Batmanne Pluchar

I went into this Mission Trip with only one expectation: it would be as good as, if not better than last time. It did not disappoint.

While a six hour car ride with a van full of girls may seem like a bad idea, I can actually say I enjoyed it. We all got along well and I think my dad was only slightly disturbed by our girl talk. One of the things I love about car rides is the time you get to know people before the Mission part even starts. There's no better way to become comfortable with one another than to lay across each other in an effort to stretch your legs or reach the snacks. It really gets you out of your comfort zone and into the realization that this is how the next week is going to be, so you'd better get used to it.

The past couple years at worksite, I've been either cleaning or scraping paint. I'm pretty sure my dad made that happen. This was the first time I got to paint and I really did enjoy it. While it may not have been as big of a difference as going out and fixing homes in the community, I know I helped. The church we were in was gracious enough to let us stay there, so getting the chance to help them was awesome. You could see the difference in the paint job and it really did look so much better afterwards. On the second day, Kenzie, Katie, and I stayed back to finish up. Being with just two other people gave us an opportunity to get to know each other better. Kenzie came from a small town where they liked to hang out at the gas station. I still cannot wrap my mind around that. That worksite showed me how other people from a totally different background can be on the same Mission that we are.

Kid's Club was an adventure. I always love playing with the kids and getting to know them. This year a boy named Dayquan asked me for a piggyback ride and decided to be friends with me. After running around with him for a while he decided to sit down. He told me how he lives with his grandma and has to rescue her from snakes in their house. Another boy ran up and told him the snakes were just in a movie. Dayquan said he pulled them right out of the screen and smacked them on the ground. His imagination reminded me of when I was little and would pretend to fight monsters. The kids at Kid's Club really aren't that different from kids in our own community. They might not be as well off, but at heart they are all just kids.

I don't even know where to begin talking about the Youthworks staff, or Club, or the evening activities. Noah, Mallory, James, Tenisha, and John were all amazing. It's crazy how people can just come into your lives and seem like they've been there all along. Club was an amazing experience. It gives you a chance to just let everything out and be who you are. I remember looking around during one of the songs and seeing people singing who normally didn't even say the responses in church. At the mass we went to, everyone just let loose to praise God. On the scavenger hunt, despite being the thirty minute late party van, we all helped in the search and just enjoyed the ride. During bowling, my lane didn't even keep score, we just had fun being crazy. At the cook out, despite only having a veggie burger an hour after the food was served, we all sat and

talked and hung out with the kids and each other and the community. You can't find that sense of togetherness anywhere else.

Finally, the one thing that always amazes me is how close I get to my own family. Although I tactfully manage to avoid my parents except for family pictures and asking for money, I do enjoy spending the week with them. Most of all though, I enjoy the time with my cousins. It's surprising how close you can become with people you thought you were already close to. I don't get to see my out of town cousins that often, so I love the time we do get. Sometimes it's as simple as falling asleep to Zoolander while sprawled across the basement, and sometimes it's as crazy as seeing each other singing during worship. There is no set way to get to know one another, but I know that every year, I get closer to my cousins. I don't even have to ask them for goodbye hugs anymore, they come right up to me when I hold my arms out and hug me right back.

There is no conclusion I can write to wrap this up. You go into Mission Trip hoping for the best and you always come back a little disappointed. You're not disappointed in the trip, you're disappointed it had to end. But there's always the hope of next year, and the knowledge that your own Mission is never complete.

Zachary helm

When I first got to the church to go on the mission trip I didn't know to expect. When I got there, Mrs. Evans took me over to where all the guys were. I couldn't believe how quickly I was accepted.

When I first got to Cairo, I looked around and saw what terrible conditions the people were living in. I could see why as a group, we came down to help them. We painted the outside of a lady's house who had cancer. She tried to help us when she could but she tired easily. We finished the house and she was very grateful. At kids club we played games, made crafts, and read to them. The kids were very happy to have us there.

I felt that the trip brought me closer to God and I was able to help other people who were less fortunate than me.

CAIRO REFLECTION SHEET By: Katie Ruane

This was my very first mission trip, but definitely not my last! In the packet we had questions to ask our group, but one stood out to me; "What are some stereotypes we might have about the community we are visiting? How might these be untrue?" This stood out to me because I had some stereotypes going into Cairo. I just knew it was a poor, rundown city so I expected the community to be kind of rude, the children be unmanageable at times and for the buildings to be crumbling to the ground. But that is not at all what I witnessed. The community was so kind and welcoming! Everyone had a smile on their face and was so polite. And the houses weren't crumbling to the ground, they are so beautiful, just hidden by the destruction from the flooding. The children were so polite as well and were great listeners, they were never unmanageable! I have to admit, it was hard to get used to the small town feel at first since it's so different, nobody in Chicago will say hello to everyone they pass on the sidewalk or will even know a fraction of the population of Chicago. However, Cairo is different! Everyone says hello to you and you know a lot more people in the town of Cairo!

Everyone that was a part of the TNT before was so nice! I made a lot of new friendships while in Cairo with people from TNT. They told me stories from past missions, helped me out when I needed it and would just talk to me. It made me feel included and made me feel apart of the TNT group. My small group was also including! Mrs. Evans and Ellie were the leaders and helped to make me feel welcome and helped me step out of my comfort zone and not be so shy. That helped me so I could mingle more with the kids, community and the TNT members.

The rides there and back were way better then I expected! I expected them to be long and boring, but they seemed to go by so fast and I was laughing most of the time! I had a lot of the seniors on my bus and they had some great stories to share! Past mission trips and breakaway stories, all making me want to have this experience again. I will definitely go on another mission trip! I had a lot of fun and can't wait to go again!

Mission Trip 2011 Reflection

Prior to this year's mission trip, I really reflected on my own life in comparison to those across the United States, as well as across the world. I wondered why God had chosen to bless me with a wonderful town to live in that is safe, entertaining, and most notably, prosperous. I wondered why I was granted with all these special gifts while the people of Cairo don't have nearly as much. Then it all finally made sense to me. He had planned on giving my family and town more so that we could go as a church to serve and do his work. He gave us more so that we could help those who have less. This all occurred to me all over the course of this year's mission trip to Cairo, IL.

I know that I say this after every year, but this year was truly my favorite mission trip yet. The leaders this year made such an impact on me and opened my eyes to God in ways that I've never seen before. Through their stories, their experiences, and their insight I saw how God is present in our lives in many different ways. The most powerful experience for me during this trip was the prayer walk we took on Tuesday. On this prayer walk, we discussed how God has strived to help this community by simply bringing YouthWorks there. We prayed that broken down houses would soon be fixed, that the population would increase rather than continue to spiral downward. During this walk, I really learned that God doesn't simply fix communities through his divine power, he fixes them through youth like us. His work is done through us, and we were the tools he supplied to help Cairo.

Being a part of the Outrageous Sports Camp, (OSC) I was able to work with the teenagers of the community. Throughout the course of the four days, we played kickball and taught them some soccer skills as well. It was amazing to see how close we became as a group.

Although it was evident throughout the week, this struck me the hardest during the community cookout on Thursday night. Before we ate, some of the teens from OSC either played games with us, or simply just wanted to talk to us for one last time. That night, it occurred to me that these teenagers recognize the impact YouthWorks is making on their community. Although there is no doubt that the OSC workers have made an impact on these teenagers over the course of four days, that impact worked both ways. It was very difficult for me to say goodbye to these teens for one last time during the cookout because throughout the week I witnessed the potential they possess. As the future of the community of Cairo, there is no doubt in my mind that the YouthWorks has changed the lives of these teenagers forever.

Throughout my past three mission trips, never have I ever felt so connected to a community. On top of that, Cairo was by far the community that was most receptive to the influence YouthWorks has on them. On Wednesday, my group was assigned to fix up and make the outside of a local lady's house more presentable, after slightly suffering following the flood that took place in Cairo. When we finally arrived at the home, the lady gave us a tour of her house and personally shook every person's hand that was there to work. She shook our hand, we introduced ourselves, and she thanked us for the work that we would be doing on her house, as well as for the rest of the community. I'll never forget the look of joy and happiness on her face when she saw all of us arrive in our vans. Although I never got to see her after the project was finished, I heard that her landscaping had looked brand new, and she was absolutely ecstatic. That look of happiness and joy following the hard work we put into this community is truly what I look forward to the most, and what inspires me to continue to spread God's word on these mission trips.

Dave E PG 2

know how to describe it. It's like I go through my whole day and constantly think "This is normal to me, yet there are millions of people who can't do what I'm doing".

I've had a lingering question in my mind that has been bothering me since I got back. "What do I do now?" It's so broad, and I don't have much of an answer. Sure, I'm sharing my Cairo experience with friends and family, but I feel like there's more that I should be doing. I don't want this to be just a memory of a trip that I took. It shouldn't be the end, I kind of feel that it should be the beginning of a new way of life. My heart is in a different place now, and hopefully God can reveal what He wants me to do next.

Cairo 2011

Ryan

Redman

To me, the great thing about being on this trip was seeing how we each had our different perspectives and experiences. We were all mostly in the same places and doing the same things, but everyone came away with different stories. Each of us reached out to all the kids and people in the town, and it was cool to see how God could use each and every one of us and our different gifts to further his kingdom. I also enjoyed the daily devotionals, since even though we all read the same passage, for the most part everyone who shared had a different interpretation. All were equally valid, and I felt that our discussions really helped me to better understand the way I am and the way god created others.

Being back home, it feels really weird trying to get back into the "normal" routine. I feel a physical change inside, and it feels surreal to be able to take a shower when I please and get back into the habits and activities we were so accustomed to before we left. Doing ordinary things back home, such as going to the grocery store or watching TV just feels different, and I don't

Cairo Reflection - 2011

The mission trip to Cairo was inspiring and humbling. Our teens were such great examples of what Christ wants us to be like. They showed such love for the residents of Cairo through their hard work & time with the children. They also showed their love and support for each other, by welcoming the group of teenagers from Indiana into their friendships, by supporting each other on Thursday night when many needed to see and feel love and support.

Cairo is a town, at first blush, seems to have lost hope, but the more you take the time to look & listen, you realize that hope is not lost, but just needs to be nurtured, and there are many people that love them and keep their dreams alive.

I think one aspect that I learned this trip, is that although on the surface, all may seem insurmountable, with faith, hope & love for each other, as God says, all things are possible.

Kay Kempke

To say that this mission trip was successful and meaningful for both the YouthWorks participants and the community of Cairo would be putting it mildly. I was so strongly impacted and affected by the stories and experiences shared throughout this trip. Of course I will never forget the bond that we all shared on Thursday night, as I have never cried that hard in my entire life. I can truly say that the people that I shared these experiences with are no longer just friends to me, they are part of a family. I share moments with these people that I will never be able to share with my other friends at home. I will never forget how God looked over all the YouthWorks participants, staff, and community of Cairo. I pray that he continues to watch over all of us and that next year will have just as big of an impact on all of us.

DAVE E PG 3

Benjamin Malchow
7/5/2011

People Can Make a Difference

This was my first mission trip. I loved it, and I had the most amazing experience ever. It really opened my eyes for people so less fortunate than me. It was sad entering the town and seeing all those closed and destroyed buildings. For a community so poor it had such a big heart.

I loved the kids in kids club, and giving them piggy-back rides. I also loved reading to them. They were funny adorable.

The Yotthworks leaders were wonderful, they taught us so much about the community and those who live who live there. I loved the residents at the house we painted, and I really enjoyed the painting too! Working to help the community was the most extraordinary feeling ever.

The trip with TNT was excellent. They are such wonderful people, and I'm glad that God gave me the chance to know everyone involved with ~~with~~ TNT. My small group on mission was terrific, I'm very thankful for having such a great group. I am so proud of not only myself, but everyone else on the mission. They gave up their own time to help others. I will definitely bring home the experience I had, and not only share it with others but do the same for my community.

I am so blessed by God and St. Julies for giving me the opportunity to do and feel things which I have never done or felt before. It was the most beautiful experience of my life, and I will never forget it.

I will continue to help my community, and to care for and respect others. I will pray for Cairo and everyone that is trying to get Cairo back on it's feet. I will never forget Cairo, because I saw the Lords loving kindness

and how it is important to help others and not think of myself. People can make a difference, It indeed was the most memorable experience of my life, and I want to especially thank all the chaperones for giving up time to watch over us, Thank you! Together we can bridge the gap for Cairo.

Ben M.
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7-5-11
Matthew Malchow

My faith changer

The best advice I was given before leaving for Cairo was to do my best to get involved as much as I ^{could} because the week will go by fast. When I heard that I knew this was going to be hard, because I'm usually a very quiet, shy person. So I took it to heart and ^{did} my best to be different. I tried to meet new people and be more outgoing and not quiet. I thought this wasn't going to change my faith at all, since I go to daily mass read the Bible every day and volunteer at a food pantry in my spare time, to help those in need.

When we had devotion time, that changed me. Every time I opened ^{my devotion booklet} it changed me. It helped me to see that I shouldn't hate others, or get mad at things that test my faith. It helped my faith grow. I should love others no matter what, and believe in Jesus when I'm losing hope.

When I first started kids club I was scared. When Tenisha started talking I thought, "this is going to be tough", but it wasn't, in fact I loved it. I met some great kids and was sad that I only had two days with them. When I was done with kids club, it also changed my faith that kids need love and friendship, especially when there are others who aren't there to love them.

When we started work site, it was fun. We had to work as a team and get the job done in two days. Working with people on different things, getting to know each other better, and just enjoying the day was great. This changed my faith too, because we need to help others every chance we get, no ~~matter~~ matter what.

All in all, I believe that going on a mission trip is an experience every one should have. It is life changing and will make you grow in so many ways. So a big thank you TNT for this opportunity. The Lord showed me so much through this experience, and it was life changing in so many ways.

MATT Malchow

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Colin Callagher

Cairo Reflection

My experience at Cairo, IL has changed the way I look at my life now and in the future. Just looking around the town made me think how horrible some people's lives can be and how lucky I am not to be living like them. After experiencing the trip, it changed how I looked at my future. In the future, I'm not going to care if I don't have the fastest car, largest home, live in the best neighborhood, because I now know how much worse life can really be. I am blessed and thank God that I ~~was~~ am one of the people who has the better life.

During my experience with Kid's Club, it made me think how much of a less cruel punishment I get from my parents. I met the nicest little kid ever in Kid's Club. He respected all of us how we wanted to, without telling him. But, as soon as you looked at him, you could tell he was abused. He had burns from an iron all across his body. But why would anyone abuse such a nice kid like that? That's when I became so much more thankful to God for giving me parents who only punish me by at most being ~~grounded~~ grounded for a month. I'd take being grounded than an iron on the back anyday.

In conclusion, after working in Cairo, I am ~~sure~~^{so} much more thankful for what ~~has~~ God has given me other than upset for what he has not. My attitude has changed from "I want those nice shoes" to "I'm lucky I even have shoes." Going to Cairo, IL has changed my life forever and will always ~~stay~~^{be} in my memories.

Colin Gallagher
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To tell you the truth, I'm not sure what a reflection is or what I'm supposed to be writing about but here we go. In a dictionary the word reflection is defined as a fixation of thoughts on something or careful consideration. It also says the image that is reflected from a mirror of some sort. So I've decided to write about how I thought of mission trip and what it has done to change who I am today. Coming into mission trip I saw it as an opportunity to get service hours and an opportunity to get away from the stress and sadness of my life for five days. I had no clue how much it would change my life. Before this fantastic journey I had no religion, I saw it as a joke to tell you the honest truth. And I would see people who worshiped the Lord seriously and would have to look twice because I didn't know how they could do that. I was lost, waiting to be found.

My mom was sick, I thought if God was really here for us then why is she dying? None of religion made sense to me. I thought that if you did pray to him he would fix everything. But yet, people were still dying every second and God was doing nothing about it. Little did I know, my life was going to be flipped upside down. The major thing in which I did learn from mission was that just because things don't happen the way you want them to happen God makes it that way because he knows it's better for you in the end. Everyone has a time in which god will take them, if they have done what they were suppose to do in life then they will go to heaven and spend eternity with God and Jesus. Everyone gets so sad when a loved on dies, but they should be happy for them in truth! They are going to live the good part of their lives the part in which they will be the most happy and they will be the most alive. Mission trip taught me that my mom got sick for a reason; this reason was for God to connect with me. It was for me to find our heavenly father. I found him, and I found Jesus too. And they are phenomenal.

This trip taught me that I am never alone, and they are always watching over me. It taught me everything happens for a reason and just because its not the way I want it to be it will be better for me in the end. It will somehow make me stronger or smarter or all around better in some way. Today when I look in the mirror I see someone who is stronger now that she has found Jesus and God. And now that she realizes that she loves them she will live a better life in the hand with them. I used to never go to church and now I go to my church every Sunday. I used to see it as very dumb and boring to go to church but now I am enlightened by our Lord and it is exciting and fun! The opportunity I have now in life has broadened and I see myself as a new person. Never thought I would be this much involved in my church ever in my life. And the difference of who I was and who I am now is so great. I am now enlightened to be a better person and not be left behind in life without our Lord. I am so grateful for being able to go on this mission trip. It has changed who I am and it has changed how I see life itself.

If I could I would also like to thank all the people who were on this mission trip because they all helped me find they helped me find myself which was deep inside of me waiting to burst out. I would recommend this trip to anyone who crossed my path, and I do believe that I will go next year and the year after because it wasn't only the most delightful experience of my life it was the most fun. I met so many new people who I just love to share the love of our Lord with. This experience changed my life and it changed my outlook on life. Thank you for giving me a chance to participate in such an amazing experience.

Rebecca V pager

- A lot fun
- Outrageous sports camp was the most fun I have ever have at a mission trip
- I got a lot closer to so many people on this past mission trip
- I also became great friends with the kids at OSC
- The work sites I went to were so much fun. (Especially David and I with our rakes)
- I really liked the scavenger hunt and all of the other evening activities
- Another great part were all the great clubs at night.
- I liked the last club where we really got to know everyone...
- My favorite part was of course getting closer to God and getting deeper into my understanding of my faith.

By Ben Warpinski

- **A lot of fun**
- **I liked meeting all of the kids club kids**
- **I liked the work sites**
- **I enjoyed meeting and hanging out with the kids from St. Julie and Indiana**
- **The group Hokey Pokey was fun**
- **The Van rides were fun**
- **I got a lot better at ERS**
- **I learned about chiggers**
- **Building card houses**
- **I can't wait until next year**

By Will Warpinski

Nina Ramos

July 7, 2011

Reflection

Cairo has been my second mission trip ever attending with St. Julies TNT. It was one of the most incredible things I've ever experienced. I got to meet a lot of the kids in the community and heard some pretty crazy stories that I wasn't expecting to hear. I made new friends that made a huge impact on my life. I got to help others who needed me and I felt great for doing it. The Youthworks staff was so welcoming and they felt like family. We don't only do these mission trips to help others but we do it to bring God into their lives. He gave us the opportunity and courage to help others and their loved ones in Cairo. Even though we may have more than them, we all have one thing in common; we love God and we except him as our savior. One thing that I've learned from this trip is that you don't need to get anything in return for showing you care. Coming home from Cairo made me appreciate what I have at home because I have a great life and family that cares for me. God loves each and every one of us and he has his reasons for everything that happens. I know that helping people is a gift God has given me and going to Cairo helped me show this special trait I have. I look forward to going on the mission trip next year and I plan on continuing to introduce God to my friends and family.

Rob Holan

I went in expecting Cairo to be really run down and I thought it would be flooded. I also expected the people to be unfriendly. I expected tons of trouble with the kid's club kids and thought painting a house would be really boring. I also expected the Youthworks people to be old and lame. In addition, I was nervous about spending my birthday in an unfamiliar town with people I only sort of knew.

There are a few memories from Cairo that stick out in my mind. One of them is from kid's club. I was in the reading post group, and led one of the age groups the first of my two days. I found out later that it was the youngest group. When I asked for volunteers to read, a few kids (more than the other age groups) came up. When I showed the first one where to start, I got the reply, "What's it say?" I learned that kid couldn't read, so I went to the next one and got the same reply. After either two or three times getting this reply, I asked anyone who didn't know how to read to go back to the benches. They all went back. I ended up reading the bible story to them.

There was also quite some fun painting houses. Among the messages painted on, then painted over, were "JS<3ES," "CARE-0 2011," and "St. Julie Cairo Mission (smiley) Trip 2011." Also, Michelle, apparently inspired by a dream, covered her sunglasses lenses with paint then wrote St. Julie TNT Mission Trip 2011 on them in the paint. It was harder to see through them, but it was probably worth it.

Another fun time was the scavenger hunt. It got really crazy, which made it really awesome. The main things I remember from that are Becca taking one van's keys and Nick Metzler blocking the exit from our van at the next stop. I also remember just as much chaos while people were driving. One van, I forget which one, took a side street to get to the übercross sooner. And then there's the party van, which just got totally lost and had to skip most or all of the pictures.

Although I came in with low expectations, it was a great week. Cairo was nicer than I thought, though still in need of work, and it wasn't flooded. The locals were friendly. The kids were fun and adorable, and painting houses was tons of fun