



Mission Office
Archdiocese of Los Angeles
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MISSIONS LA

MISSION OFFICE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOS ANGELES

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Mission Happenings



FR. AYOTTE BACK FROM CHINA

Fr. David Ayotte recounts his recent visit to China.

China is an oasis for not simply sharing the Gospel but a place to let the proclamation of the Gospel be enriched and shaped by the wisdom of many traditions.

Twenty years ago I began studying with the Divine Word Missionaries to be a missionary for China. While life took me in other directions, I felt blessed to finally make it to the mainland for two weeks in May to meet with the Bishops of Beijing and Xi'an. The experience was marvelous and it was difficult to leave. China remains a call for the Church to be present, listening, offering her wisdom when asked, not simply for the life of the Chinese, but that through China, the Church may be more true to who she is and her own identity as missionary.

One billion two hundred million people are grounds enough for considering China important. Given one of the richest and oldest cultures on earth is another. For the missionary, however, China is an oasis for not simply sharing the Gospel but a place to let the proclamation of the Gospel be enriched and shaped by the wisdom of the traditions of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, as well as by the contemporary 'religion' of materialism, whether atheistic Marxist/Maoist thought or agnostic capitalism. All of these are thriving in China.



Missionaries first arrived in Xi'an in the 7th century, a beginning later to be strengthened by the visionary approach of the 17th-century Jesuit, Mateo Ricci. Regrettably, the oppressive colonialism of the past two centuries has left China and its government cautious of any foreign religious groups.

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Have You Visited Our Web Site?

www.missionsla.org

or send us an e-mail regarding any of your concerns for the missions.

missionoffice@la-archdiocese.org
lmh@la-archdiocese.org (LMH)



Missionaries are allowed into the country only in the capacity as teachers of needed subjects, such as the sciences or English. They do not have permission to evangelize by preaching, but they can evangelize by assisting in schools, hospitals and other social services.

China's is the fastest-growing economy in the world (7% annually). China is looking outside of herself and is moving quickly. What is exciting is the people's great openness to others and new ways of doing things. Such rapid change has also led to serious questioning of the importance of values, the family, and how to maintain continuity in a sea of change. Without grounding, rapid change and greatly expanded expectations can lead to violence and the growth of authoritarianism. I believe that faith, whichever faith it may be, will prove helpful in keeping people from losing their way.

The Missionary, Leader for Christ

In my travels and reflections on world problems, what stands out is a crisis of leadership. Resources are available to feed and educate the poor, catechetical tools exist to explain the gospel in its essentials. What is missing is leaders with the qualities of Christian leadership. What then are some essential qualities of leader for mission today?

■ **Christ is core.** Without a prayer life that continually returns us to Christ as the center of our decisions and relationships, we end up worshipping ourselves. Faith is the fundamental trust connection to God, realizing that we are not God, and that our completion remains a dependency made fruitful by how deeply we trust Christ's word and guidance.

■ **Faith/trust without love leaves us dead.** Duty can weigh down our heart to the point that we can no longer respond to the pleasure of existing or the value of persons. Love embraces everything that we are, our feelings, our hopes, and our weaknesses. Love always runs the risk of death, but it also reveals the fullness of life. When real, it bears fruit in relationships that inspire people to great levels of courage in protecting the poorest, and it restores laughter in the community. The current sex scandals of the American Church reveal that not entering into full-hearted loving has an essential connection to chastity. Not the chastity of psychological sublimation or repression, but that of our rich tradition. Very simply, chastity is to place our body-self at the service of God's love, as God wills. Chastity is the door to social justice. When we learn to control our desires because of our respect for the needs of others, we discover appropriate principles for global community.

■ **The missionary leader must hope.** This hope flows from a confidence in God's weaving of the events of life into meaningful events. If we see God transforming reality, nothing is unimportant; even the horrible can become a healing wound. Events are not to be reinterpreted in such a way that an event like the Holocaust is seen as something good. No, there is evil; and it is not the flip side of God. But Augustine can say the present world is more filled with God's love than it would be if there were no evil. Why? Because in it we experience that God is with us, even in the suffering. Before the mystery we hear, as did Julian of Norwich: "All will be well, all will be well."

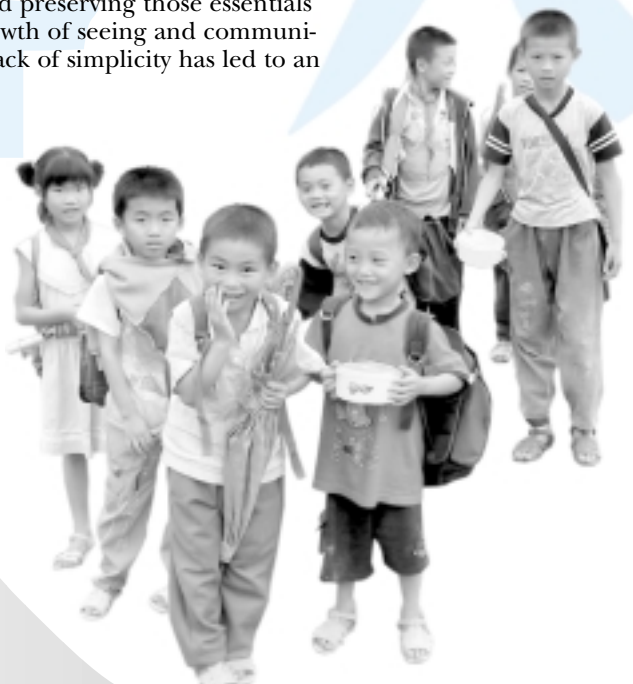
■ **The Christian leader must be simple.** Now, more than ever, the old adage — Keep it simple, stupid applies. Simplicity is not naiveté. It is a recognition of the essentials of an issue and preserving those essentials from hyperactivity, emotionalism, and angry pride. Simplicity is an outgrowth of seeing and communicating with God — single-mindedness. And it brings clarity. Regrettably, lack of simplicity has led to an enormous self-defensiveness — of our reputations and of our amassed wealth, as individuals, institutions and nations. The Christian leader is forced to be simple so that he or she can hear God and, in following God's lead, serve as a beacon for the rest of the community.

■ **Today's leaders in mission must know how to network,** to desire to listen to the community so that the community may become greater. The Christian leader hears God in the community and helps the community recognize the Spirit's activity.

Being a missionary means being a Christian leader. To go where God sends you regardless of what others say or think, to pour out your life in love, to speak and be a word of life — such a missionary, a leader for Christ, is a true vessel of God's delight.

"Without a prayer life that continually returns us to Christ as the center of our decisions and relationships, we end up worshipping ourselves."

— Fr. David Ayotte

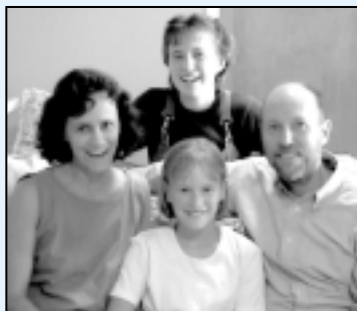


To get involved call Mission Doctors or Lay Mission-Helpers

LMH (213) 637-7222 • MDA (213) 637-7499

KIDS IN MISSION

Anna Kummer, 16-year-old daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Mark Kummer writes from Guatemala: The indigenous women do not have a lot of options for education or any life other than marriage at 17 (or younger) and carrying water and cooking over open fires. For this reason, it's so exciting to see El Centro Maya, a school run by the Asunción sisters, where my Mom and I are working. The center gives them a grade-school education to grades 3 or 4. That doesn't sound like a lot, but considering that people with a high-school education are qualified to be grade-school teachers, that's a pretty big step. At The Center,



The Kummer family is currently working at the St. Luis Parish in Guatemala.

they also teach practical skills that can help the girls get jobs and better their lives. In computer class, they are learning how to make spreadsheets! Is that incredible or what? A lot

"Sometimes I think that I would like to be like the other 'normal' teenagers with a boyfriend, 'a car to cruise around in and a good job with lots of friends, but I'm glad to be where I am..."

— Anna Kummer

of their houses have dirt floors and thatch roofs, and they can make spreadsheets...It's really interesting to be in a foreign country as a missionary at my age. I mean, a lot of

almost-17-year-old girls are sneaking out, lying to their parents and having fights and disagreements about who gets the car and who they can go out with. Instead, I am working with my parents, teaching classes, helping the people, learning a new language and culture and trying to be a model for other teens. It's really cool. Sometimes I think that I would like to be like the other "normal" teenagers with a boyfriend, a car to cruise around in and a good job with lots of friends, but I'm glad to be where I am—and it's not like I can't be a teenager here...



Do You Have What It Takes To Be a Missionary?

Place a checkmark next to each statement that applies to you.

- I have surrendered my life to God and let his Spirit guide me.
- I have a quiet trust that God will supply all the needs of his work, even without human guarantees.
- I sympathize with people and do not have to be the center of attention.
- I am tactful with people and adaptable to new circumstances.
- I have zeal to serve and am steadfast when discouraged.
- I love communion with God in prayer and the study of scripture.
- I have had experience in doing God's work.
- I have a healthy body and a vigorous mind.

— TOTAL number of checks

SCORING:

- 6-8** God may well be preparing you for mission.
- 3-5** You probably have an aptitude for mission, but need to do more spiritual work.
- 0-2** You need serious spiritual maturing before thinking of mission. For help, contact the LMH Office. (The list is taken from Hudson Taylor's qualities of a missionary.)

HCA HAIL AND FAREWELL

A sad goodbye to Sr. Imelda D'Agostino, who is leaving the Mission Office in August after eight years of directing the Holy Childhood Association, and a warm hello to her successor, John Perez. During Sr. Imelda's watch, the HCA has been extended to every Catholic school and every parish religious education program, grades 1-8. The motto of the HCA is "Children Helping Children" — and under Sr. Imelda's leadership there has been a steady growth in Mission Awareness, a trend she very much hopes will continue. Her leadership and personal sensitivity to the needs of others has inspired Directors and Catechists to motivate their students to pray for, learn about and share with those less fortunate than themselves. A major new direction she encouraged has been the development of resources in



Sr. Imelda

Spanish, on a minimal level here, but with a push for the national office of the HCA to expand available resources. Asked why a mission outreach to children is important, Sr. Imelda answered, without skipping a beat, "Because **a sense of mission begins at an early age.**" On the blessing that her work for the missions has brought her, Sr. Imelda said: "I've educated myself and been educated to my own baptismal commitment to mission." John Perez, who is already on board, said that he is enthusiastic about picking up the baton in this important work and hopes to be able to contribute to its ongoing success, happy that his ability to speak Spanish will continue the outreach to Latino children. Besides directing the HCA, John Perez will be working to extend and support the Mission Circles.

MISSIONS LA

is a quarterly newsletter of the Mission Office of Los Angeles. We appreciate your letters, suggestions, and mission news items.

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<http://www.missionsla.org>

There is another way to share your blessings with the PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH... YOUR WILL

This is a unique way to give to the Church and insure that your desire to help the Missions continues.

MISSION HAPPENINGS

➔ **Mission Circles** extend a big welcome to **John Perez** as the new coordinator. If you want to start a mission circle in your parish, let him know.

➔ **The year 2005** will be the 50th anniversary of the LMH. If you have pictures, documents or ideas for the celebration, contact Janice England.

➔ The **Mission Office** is currently sponsoring the annual Mission Coop. Stop to chat with the missionary preaching in your church — and be as generous as you can.

➔ **Janice England**, program coordinator for Lay Mission-Helpers Association has completed two visits to our lay missionaries in East and West Africa. We'll get her stories in the next issues.

➔ **Fr. Dave Ayotte** has returned from an international conference on mission animation for youth held in Costa Rica. He was a representative in the US delegation.

➔ **Elise Frederick**, program coordinator for Mission Doctors, recently returned from Thailand and the Phillipines. She was visiting sites that are seeking Lay Mission-Helpers and Mission Doctors.

➔ Happy Birthday To Our Missionaries In The Field

August: Miklos Szentkiralyi (Pohnpei), Carrie Rieden (Marshall Islands) and Billy Medina (Cameroon), and Bud Ozar (American Samoa).

September: Pamela Chen (American Samoa), Mitch Tolbert, and Mark Kummer (Guatemala).



Feeding program in Manila.



The Mission Office of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles is anxious to share this important resource with you. As we approach the anniversary of September 11, 2001, parishes, Catholic schools, small Christian communities, and others from across the country are joining together to remember and to respond in a faith-filled way.

As Catholics, we draw on our faith to make this anniversary a time to remember, a time to deepen our commitment to discipleship, and a time to strengthen our active participation in efforts to build a more just and peaceful world.

We invite you to visit the web site of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops for ideas you can use for your school, parish, community, joining with others around the country as we look back and move forward. www.usccb.org/publishing/9-11/

TO MAKE A BEQUEST

The correct legal designation for gifts by will or trust is:

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