

Sister Dioceses: A Report

Earlier this year the dioceses of Rochester and Tabasco, Mexico, agreed to become sister dioceses. The purpose of the action was to give both dioceses access to programs and personnel which may improve on services each provides.

Several joint programs have taken place since the two sees, joined forces, including a special mission to Tamulte de las Sabanas, a small village in Tabasco, by six people from Rochester this summer.

The mission team, sponsored by the International Justice and Peace Commission, St. Bernard's Seminary Mission Society, the Sisters of St. Joseph, the Sisters of Mercy, and several parishes in diocese, was sent to provide medical care, work on agrarian programs and to provide religious instruction.



From left, Paul Thompson, Barbara Fagan and Sister Susan Nowak, SSJ, speak to a group at St. Bernard's Seminary last week.

Three of the missionaries were on hand last week at St. Bernard's to explain the work they performed and how their visit affected them personally.

Sister Susan Nowak, SSJ, Barbara Fagan, and Paul Thompson, presented a slide show of Tamulte. The other team members were Sister Mary Lou Mitchell, SSJ, Mary Thompson, and the Rev. Mr. Paul Tomasso. Lourdes Perez-Albuerne, coordinator for the Justice and Peace Commission, travelled to Tabasco for two weeks and served as interpreter.

The mission team worked in conjunction with CICODET, an agency similar to the Justice and Peace Commission, established by Bishop Rafael Garcia y Gonzalez, ordinary of Tabasco. Bishop Garcia visited Rochester early this year and met with Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

The mission team, together with Tamulte pastor, Father Lucas, worked on a variety of projects including a family vegetable garden project (to improve the residents'

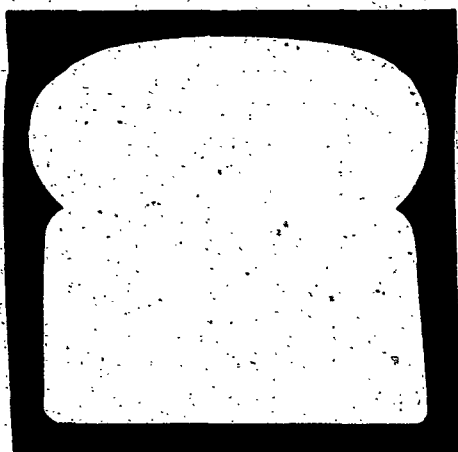
diet), adult religious instruction, physical education for the children and teenagers, and medical assistance and instruction.

The missionaries all felt that they had received more from the Tamulte residents than they had given. Paul Thompson and Barbara Fagan both agreed that the most important thing the mission achieved was showing the residents that they were cared for and there were people who wanted to help.

Sister Susan said that she learned the true meaning of giving. "People who had nothing to give would come to us every day with eggs and bread and they were very happy to give them," she said.

Mrs. Perez reported that other joint programs, including another mission to Tabasco and visitors from Mexico here, are now being looked at and the sister dioceses continue to work closely with each other.

Operation Breadbox



Our sister diocese received almost \$16,000 through the effort of Operation Breadbox in 1980.

Operation Breadbox, under the auspices of the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, because of its objectives, is able to dovetail neatly into projects designed to help in Tabasco.

Breadbox aims to "make as many people as possible aware of what is being done to reduce hunger and injustice in the world... to create a spiritual bond between those directly involved in the project and those unable to directly participate... to financially support selected projects in third world countries through donations as well as supporting local hunger projects."

In 1980, Breadbox collected a total of \$40,401 through projects through the diocese during Lent. Three areas were earmarked for help, Mexico (Tabasco), Africa and the Philippines. Of the total, \$15,965 went to Mexico, \$9,369 to the Philippines and \$5,183 to Africa.

The Tabasco contributions helped to enlarge a revolving fund from which farmers can

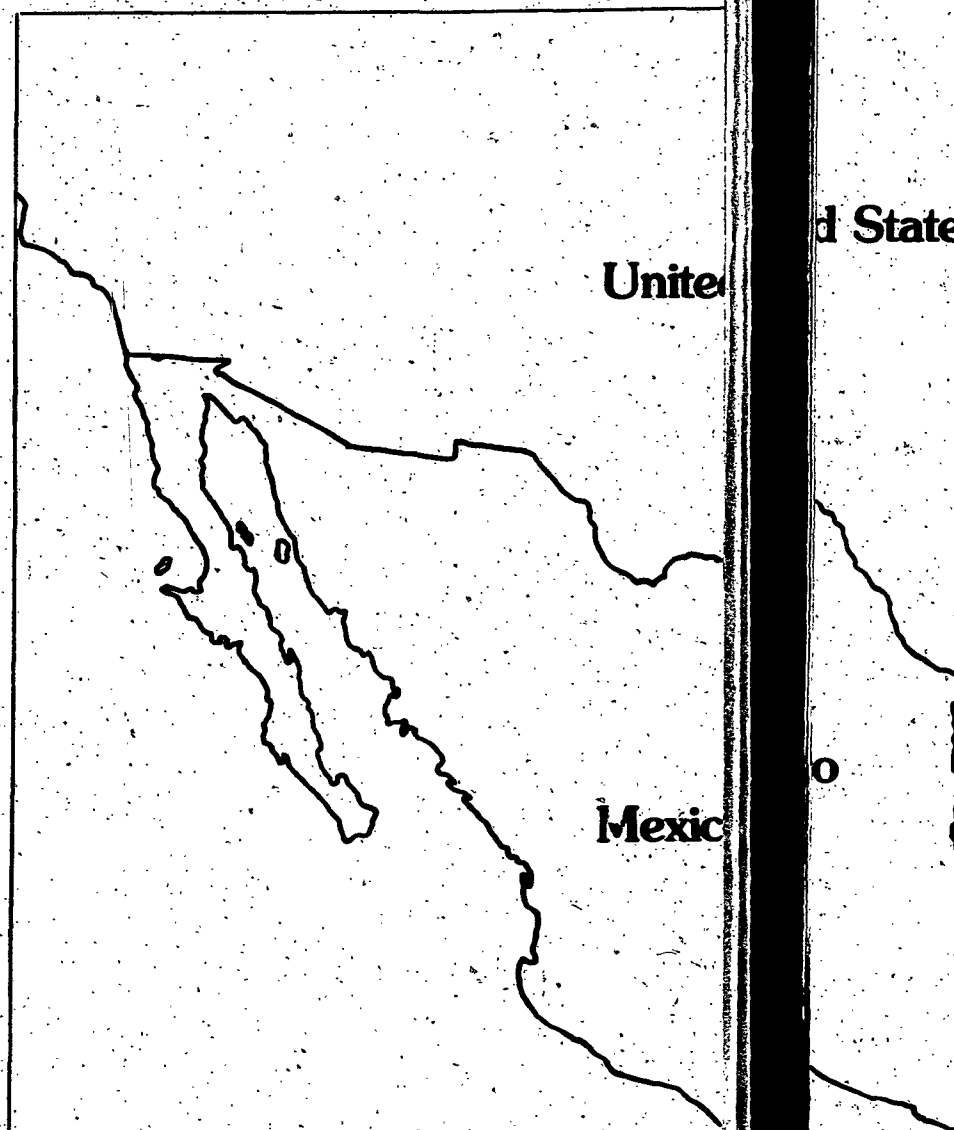
borrow, at low interest, to purchase calves to be fattened or cows to produce milk. The farmers pay their debts through the sale of the calves or the dairy cows.

Funds also continue the establishment of co-operatives for food-related projects. Some examples have been the building of silos to store grain, the marketing of vegetables and the purchase of commodities in bulk.

Breadbox funds also support small experimental agricultural projects designed to improve crops, provide a richer diet and provide for optimum use of available land.

Seventy-five percent of the money collected here goes directly to the project chosen by the contributors. All administrative costs for Breadbox are paid for by Justice and Peace. The other 25 percent are used for local hunger projects, as selected by the regions of the diocese.

Anyone desiring further information or wishing to join in next year's effort should contact the International Justice and Peace Commission, 750 W. Main St., Rochester, N.Y. 14611.



Our Mexican...

The State of Tabasco is at the southeastern part of Mexico near Guatemala. It has a tropical climate and wetlands vegetation. During the day, temperatures hit 102 degrees with a humidity of 85 percent. The capital of Tabasco is Villahermosa.

Last summer, our diocesan missions team visited the parish of Tamulte de las Sabanas. Tamulte has a population of 5,000 but the parish serves some 30,000, including neighboring rural communities.

From Here to There



Last July, a Mission team from Rochester, left, visited Tabasco. Back row, Paul Thompson, Sister Susan Nowak, SSJ; Sister Mary Lou Mitchell, SSJ; Barbara Fagan; in front, Mary Thompson and the Rev. Mr. Paul Tomasso. And when the Diocese of Tabasco celebrated its 100th anniversary, right, Father Douglas Hoffman, then director of Pastoral Ministry for Rochester, and Lourdes Perez-Albuerne, diocesan Justice and Peace coordinator, were on hand.

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