

Tabasco

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Padre Lucas' goals is to help them recover aspects of their culture. Much of it has been lost in this century, due to previous government suppression of their language and customs. He regards its recovery as a key to their realization of their human dignity, especially now as the pace of change continues to quicken.

Another goal is to work with the people in developing leadership. In the last two years 14 men from the parish participated in Cursillo, and out of this group, Padre Lucas hopes leadership will emerge. These people were the core participants in the Bible study classes taught by the missionaries, and when Padre Lucas was away, they worked with Sister Margaret Mary Wintish in planning the evening communion services.

Sister Sue Nowak, who with Barbara Fagan was one of the two participants in both mission efforts, could see the fruits of these efforts, noting that upon returning she could see "the growth of the Christian community at the grass-roots level."

Integrally connected to the growth of this community is the Church's response to the glaring social needs in Tamulte. On the surface, health and nutrition are two of the most obvious problems.

A dispensary has been set up in the parish complex, where medical attention and medicine are available. The constant demand for medical assistance made registered nurse Mary Elizabeth Young the most harried member of the mission team, as well as pressing other members into emergency service. Mrs. Young was once called upon to deliver a baby, while Martha Thompson was prevailed upon to treat a machete stab wound. The team's pickup truck also served as an ambulance late one Saturday night to transport a 26-year-old victim of cervical cancer to the hospital in Villahermosa.

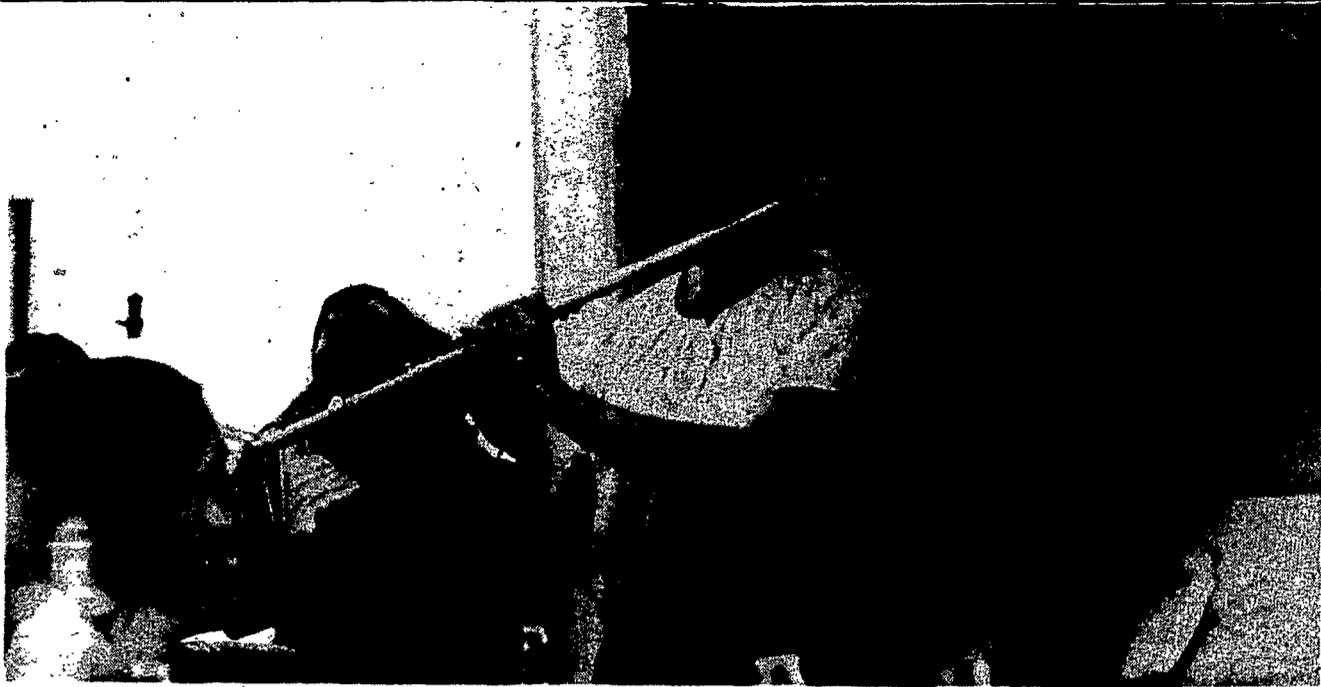
While the townspeople have become increasingly dependent on pharmaceutical drugs to ease the maladies caused by their impure water and inadequate nutrition, the thrust of Martha Thompson's work was to teach preventive methods in combatting tuberculosis.

Ms. Thompson, a graduate student in public health at the University of Hawaii, and the daughter of Bob and Sylvia Thompson of Brockport, arrived in Tamulte with the first group of missionaries, and will continue her work until early December.

In her six months, she is training the people both to take



Mary Elizabeth Young works in the dispensary.



Marilyn Bennet entertains with flute.

steps to prevent the spread of tuberculosis and to work with government health officials to test all residents and treat those with the disease.

Dealing with nutritional deficiency is another area in which Padre Lucas and CICCODET have worked together. One of the projects that is funded by the Diocese of Rochester's Operation Breadbox, and implemented through the expertise of CICCODET agronomists, is the planting of a dozen "hortalizas" or vegetable gardens. Planted through collective efforts, on privately owned property, these gardens have introduced a variety of new vegetables to the Tamulte diet.

Most people there are dependent on corn. This year, however, the corn crop was destroyed by the early rain that flooded the fields before harvest.

Padre Lucas reflected on what the lost crop will mean for the people, and encapsulated the essence of life in Tamulte. "They take it naturally," he said. "They're accustomed to poverty, and they take not having food as something normal. They'll have at least one meal a day."

Such circumstances in health care and nutrition explain why it is that the beautiful, bright-eyed, smiling children who would attend the religious education classes each morning

Photos by Mary Holdkamp

conducted by Sisters Carol Cimino, Clare Brown and Margaret Mary Wintish were so much smaller than the North American children of the same age.

They also provide the reason why the children's parents, people who work from before dawn until after dusk simply to survive, look so much older than their counterparts in the United States.

Sharing the life of the people of Tamulte provided for serious reflection in most of the missionaries. Like the people of Tamulte, the missionaries spent much of their time performing basic tasks, such as cooking, cleaning and washing clothes. "So much of our time was spent on survival," Sister Marilyn Pray said, "that I realized that at home, we're not in touch with basic human needs. It took more energy than I expected just to survive."

The difficulty of life in Tamulte impressed Sister Sue Nowak when she first went to Tamulte in 1980. "This year," she said, "it made it even harder for me, as I came to know the people more personally. I felt the injustice even more, because I saw the potential that was not going to be realized."

"They are no longer an anonymous group of people," she continued, "but individuals I know, and I am struggling with the need in myself to respond to them."

Sister Clare Brown noted that living with the people of Tamulte "helped us realize the richness of our gifts." She also said, "It is important for us to go beyond ourselves. We have problems here, but our gifts have to go beyond our own boundaries. We can too easily become closed, and forget that the Church is universal."

After visiting Tamulte, one may better understand why the crucifixes the people hang are fronted by a suffering, anguished Christ. There was no sign there of the Christ we seem to prefer here, the one who went straight to Easter without passing Good Friday.

Seven weeks was an extremely short period for a mission venture. To be sure, it is not enough time to begin to impact the enormous needs in Tamulte. Nonetheless, Padre Lucas said, "All year the people ask, 'When are the missionaries coming?' They feel that you are a part of the community."

Building relationships between Rochester and Tabasco is precisely what the mission is all about, relationships that will enhance the dignity of the people in both places. For Rochester, the mission to Tamulte makes painfully real the struggle for dignity and justice in the Third World. For Tamulte, the concern of the Diocese of Rochester is a source of hope, hope that Christians working together as sisters and brothers, despite vast differences, can make real the justice promised by God.

Area Guadalupe Rites To Cover Four Days

A four-day celebration of the 450th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Guadalupe will be staged in Rochester Dec. 9-12.

Fliers announcing the event are being distributed in the area by Mrs. Mary Kelly of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima and a long-time promoter of Marian devotion.

Each day of the celebration will be marked by recitation of the rosary and Mass in both Spanish and English. Father John Podsiadlo, SJ, will lead the rites at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 9, at Old St. Mary's Church. Father Robert Ritz, CSB, will preside at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 10, at Holy Rosary Church; and

Father Dennis Bonsignore will preside at 7:30 p.m., Dec. 11, at Holy Apostles Church.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will be principal concelebrant of the anniversary Mass, 7 p.m., Dec. 12, at Corpus Christi Church. A dish-to-pass fiesta will follow the Mass.

Devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Queen of the Americas, has several times been championed by Pope John Paul II. He has dedicated his pontificate to Mary under those titles.

The story of the apparitions relates that the Blessed Virgin appeared to Juan Diego, just north of Mexico City; Mexico, between Dec. 9 and 12, 1531, and miraculously

left her picture on his cloak. The cloak has been enshrined and is the object of popular devotion and pilgrimage since that time.

OBM DINNER

The Board of Directors of the Office of Black Ministries has slated a banquet at 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, at Arena Banquet House. The keynote address will be given by Sister Toinette Eugene, recently appointed assistant professor of Education, Society and Black Church Studies at Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Tickets for the dinner are \$13 per person and are obtained by calling 328-3210.

Teen Pregnancies

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Mulligan warned in his September letter, "We feel it will be necessary to oppose this proposal should it move further in the approval process."

Since the time of that letter, however, a number of things have occurred, most notably, the withdrawal of APAG's proposal and the announcement Oct. 30 of the formation of the Community Coalition on Teen Pregnancy, a group which includes the diocese, Action for a Better Community, the Ibero-American Action League, the Pan African Cultural Exposition, the Spanish Pentecostal Church Association and United Church Ministry.

That group called for a number of hearings throughout the county to

elicit community views on the problems of teen pregnancies, and only after the hearings to devise a program to meet the needs expressed.

And late last week it was learned that APAG had voted to join that coalition. Should that happen, Father Mulligan said earlier, "We would have a highly politically and religiously based group with a lot of lines being crossed."

The group is now establishing a number of hearings, Father Mulligan said, on the problems of teen pregnancies. "We're going out to listen. We don't think it's been done with that kind of coalition base."

In addition, the diocese is looking especially to parish staffs and church groups for testimony at those hearings

PLANETARIUM — "Skies of Autumn," a mini-show about the seasonal night sky, 7:30 p.m., nightly, now through Dec. 13. Adults, \$1.25; students (7-12th grades) \$.75; children (K-6th grade) \$.25; children under 5 not admitted.

CENACLE REUNION

Persons who have made the Effective Living Seminar at Cenacle Center for Spiritual Renewal will gather for an Effective Living Reunion 7:30-9:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 19. The program will be led by Sister Betty Rogers, RC.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting news to the Courier-Journal is noon on Thursday preceding the following Wednesday's publication.

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