



EL NIÑO REY

A Mexican Scholarship Program and Dental Mission

November 2009

Continuing the Mission

2009 El Niño Rey trips provide dental care to nearly 1,000 patients

Last January, El Niño Rey sent two more groups of dentists, hygienists and volunteers to Guerrero's Sierra Madre mountains.

Over the course of only a few long days, these dedicated volunteers were able to serve nearly 1,000 residents in the villages of San Sebastian, Tonalapa, Las Parotas and Llando Grande.

In the past, the dentists mainly performed extractions. Now, thanks to the generosity of St. Norbert, El Niño Rey has been able to acquire the necessary materials to perform more cleanings and fillings, focusing on preventative care and education, rather than simply alleviating pain.

"The Mexican people that we meet place a great importance on faith and family," said Bill Holohan, a St. Norbert dentist who partici-

pated in his sixth El Niño Rey trip in January. "I always come home with a greater appreciation for my own."

These were the fifteenth and sixteenth groups sent since Fr. Matt and a small group of dentists from St. Norbert embarked on the first trip in 2001.

In January, the seventeenth and eighteenth groups will be leaving to continue the mission of El Niño Rey by providing much needed dental care to remote villages in the Sierra Madres.



2009 Dentists and Volunteers

Trip One (above) - Patti Fitzpatrick, Fr Gary Graf, Fr Bob Heinz, Bob Slovick, Bill Holohan, Tim McBride, Jim Orbon, Chuck Rubash, Nancy McGovern, Bill Gordon, John Windlinger, Patti Gries, Maureen Brady, Tyler Windlinger, Molly Gries, Maggie Luce and Tommy Gordon.

Trip Two (below) - Nancy McGovern, Fr. Brian Welter, Julie Beck, Jim Durso, Stephen Shadley, Dave Williams, Kim Busch, Rebekah Cawley, Trish Sweeney, John Gutrod, Dev Kennedy, Bill Davis, Tranquy Gomez, Karen O'Malley, Marisol Legis-Portincaso, Jim Seeberg and John Howard.

Results From the 2009 Dental Missions:

The two dental trips in 2009 were able to see nearly one thousand patients in four villages in a total time of only two weeks.

Without the medical attention provided by El Niño Rey dentists and volunteers, these men, women and children would have had no choice but to live with their ailments, leading to infection, chronic pain, and severe tooth decay.

Village	Cleanings	Fillings	Extractions	# of Patients
San Sebastian	154	210	302	286
Tonalapa	135	190	221	238
Los Parotas	139	195	216	208
Llando Grande	165	185	243	252
Total:	593	780	982	984



Dispatch From the Front

El Nino Rey Director Fr. Matt Foley checks in from his position as Army chaplain for the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan

Hermanos y Hermanas,

Here is a photo of my best attempt to look rough and tough in my battle rattle. This photo was taken prior to a night patrol with our Bravo Company. I try to go out with a different platoon every week to be with the troopers. In the dark background of the photo you can see a MRAP. We travel in MRAPs on the roads and keep these vehicles close when we dismount and do foot patrols.

These past two months have been full of ministry. Hospital visits are a daily ritual as well as praying for our Fallen Comrades. I did not travel by air very much in August; the elections here kept me close to Bagram. I will be heading out soon for ten days this month to outlying FOBs. It is always good to visit the soldiers who do not have all the comfort items that we have here in Bagram.

We have five Sunday Masses, a Friday Night Bible study with over forty Roman Catholics, Classes for First Communion, and a daily Mass. The Catholic side of the world is very rewarding here in Bagram. The Roman Catholics are hungry for their faith, plus let's face it you really do not have many other events happening you might as well go to Bible Study on a Friday night.

My 82nd DSTB Battalion, the 82nd Division Headquarters, just received information that we are extending until June of 2010. We were suppose to return in April 2010. I guess it is another fifty two days in Bagram. I feel for the families and the children. It is difficult for those on the home front.

As you know these past two months have been violent. Please remember

to pray for not only those who have died, but also the wounded. We have been blessed through your prayers. Our DSTB Troopers have had their share of engagements. Although we have suffered casualties, we have not lost a Trooper. Please keep praying for peace.

Football season is upon us and the Packers are favored to win another NFL title. Sports are big here. The great thing is you can always work out and run. I have recovered from my broken collar bone and really enjoy working out. I still want to tackle every Marine I see to pay them back for the illegal tackle they gave me back in March. I keep praying for forgiveness!

My last 5K race I finished in 21:07. Not bad for a forty six year old going through his midlife crisis in the middle of Afghanistan.

I know you do not receive many individual responses when you send an e-mail. I apologize, I do read every e-mail. It is hard to respond and I am a lazy sinner. We start at around 4:30 am and finish around 10:00 everyday. We have 1400 Troopers in our DSTB plus my Roman Catholic responsibilities.

I am very blessed to have all the comforts of home. I want for nothing, nor need anything. However, if you would like to send a care package for the Troopers I serve, the best way to send is via the U.S. Post office.

I can send everyone a thank you;



Fr. Matt Foley dons his "battle rattle" as he prepares for a night patrol with Bravo Company.

please let me know if you do not receive a thank you, then that means something has gone wrong in our system.

What do the Troopers like: disposable razors, anything AXE (a popular toiletry brand among the Troopers), beef jerky, Skittles, M&M's, licorice, gum, Starburst, candy that you find at the movies, EXCEPT CHOCOLATE, IT MELTS.

I miss you all dearly and pray often for your families.

Padre Matt

Letters and care packages can be sent to Fr. Matt at:

**FOLEY, MATT
HQ 82ND DSTB
TF GLADIUS
BAGRAM, APO AE
09354**

Reflections



Picking Up Where Fr. Matt Left Off

By Bill Holohan, DDS

Last January, we completed another safe and successful dental mission to Mexico. This was my sixth trip since we started our mission in 2001. It's funny how the trips are similar in many ways. We travel to the same area, treat a lot of people, have some fun, and come home. However, each has been special and somehow better than the last. This trip would differ from any previous trip. It would be our first trip without our leader and inspiration, Fr. Matt Foley.

Father Matt had told us a few years ago that his assignment at St. Agnes would soon be ending and that he was hoping to pursue his dream of becoming an Army chaplain. At some point he would no longer be able to go with us to Mexico. Fr. Matt had been so vital to our mission that we wondered whether we could continue without him. He assured us that we could.

Fr. Matt had made arrangements for Fr. Gary Graf to join us. He is currently the pastor of St. Gall parish on Chicago's southwest side. Father Gary was

a missionary to the Quechultenango parish prior to Fr. Matt's arrival in 1994.

Fr. Matt had told us stories about how Gary Graf was more popular down there than him. To all of us that have travelled with Matt, that was pretty hard to believe. We found out that Padre Gary is the "real deal". Not only is Gary a great priest, it was like having a professional guide travel with us. Thanks to him we received the "red carpet treatment" wherever we went. We were so blessed to have Padre Gary as a new friend of El Niño Rey.

We were equally blessed to have our own Fr. Bob Heinz travel with us. After spending a week with Fr. Bob, I can tell you that we have a great Pastor. Fr. Bob immersed himself into the experience. He hauled the gear, cleaned instruments, assisted the dentists, comforted the anxious, and inspired us with his word.

For me some of the highlights of the trip were masses with Fr. Bob. On the feast of the Epiphany we celebrated in a small room, just the team. He reminded us that the Epiphany is the feast of the Christ Child.....El Niño Rey. It was powerful, a great beginning to our mission.

Guys like Fr. Gary and Fr. Bob give

me a lot of hope for the church. Fr. Valker once said in one of his sermons, that some people "talk the talk." Fr. Matt Foley "walks the walk." You could say the same for Fr. Gary and Fr. Bob. We hope they will want to return.

Bill Holohan is a member of the El Niño Rey board of directors, as a parishioner at St Norbert.



Fr. Bob (left) and Fr. Gary (right) will be returning to Guerrero with the first of this year's missions.

An Experience Like None Other

By Tyler Windlinger

El Niño Rey is no ordinary service trip. My first experience was in 2003 on a trip for high school students, dur-



An El Niño Rey volunteer gives a brushing lesson to a young patient.

ing which I became acquainted with the town and people of Quechultenango.

I had been told of the poverty suffered by many of the locals, but our arrival did not feature the despondence I anticipated. We instead found a deeply religious and optimistic people who were grateful for what little they had, and surprisingly eager to contribute time and resources to our cause.

Three years later I got my first opportunity to attend the dental mission, and this trip really set the standard for service work at its full potential. The work was challenging, the people were inspiring, and the rural mountain setting was beautiful.

Days in the clinic were full of activity, with fearful children being re-

assured by older siblings while mothers and fathers reminded us of how much our work meant to them. Their simple lifestyle and hopeful optimism provided a humbling perspective on their definition of value, encouraging reflection on how much our culture can sometimes contradict theirs. Even today I sometimes consider their lives when pondering the order of my priorities.

Beyond the inspirational example set for us volunteers, El Niño Rey has given me many fond memories of the villages and the patients, as well as the volunteers and priests who offer their support and encouragement.

Tyler Windlinger is currently studying petroleum engineering at the University of Texas. He has visited Quechultenango on three occasions with El Niño Rey.

Award Recipients Give Back

In February, the El Niño Rey-St. Norbert Community Awards were presented to four students who have given back to their communities.

Richard Pugh, Karina Manalo, Meghan Ryan and Kevin Gries received this recognition for their work serving in soup kitchens, tutoring, mentoring younger students, leading Kairos retreats, and participating in a variety of Faith-centered activities.

Richard, Karina and Kevin began their University studies this fall at St. Louis University, Brown University, and the University of Dayton, respectively. Meghan will be graduating from Glenbrook North in the Spring.

Along with the award, the students received a letter of recognition from the ENR board of directors, as well as a small monetary award. Despite the recognition, the recipients insist that they are not the only ones who deserve this honor.

"Many other volunteers have been working tirelessly without getting recognition," said Kevin. "So a shout-out goes to all the volunteers in the St. Norbert's Youth Ministry and Maggie Bruce."

Applications for this year's awards will appear in the St. Norbert bulletins in late November and early December. Applications must be submitted no later than Dec. 18. The awards will be given out at 5pm mass on Saturday, Jan. 16.

After receiving their reward, the 2008 recipients stand with Fr Bill Vollmer. From left: Richard Pugh, Karina Manalo, Meghan Ryan, and Kevin Gries.



Where Are They Now?

If your child has participated in an El Niño Rey trip in the past, we would like to know what they are currently doing. Updates can be emailed to David Tuteur, at dtuteur@gmail.com, and may be used in future newsletters.

Esperanza Gives Gift of Hope

Through the Esperanza program, El Niño Rey provides support and assistance to single and widowed mothers in several communities in the mountains of Guerrero.

Led by ENR board member Marlo Leaman, Esperanza collects and sends donations to the community representative in Quechultenango, where they

are distributed to mothers in need.

This past year, ENR received several boxes of clothing from the St Norbert Women's Guilds, as well as a donation of backpacks, school supplies, and Spanish-language Harry Potter and Charlotte's Web books from the law firm of Hall Prangle & Schoonveld LLC in Orland Park.

Making Education Affordable

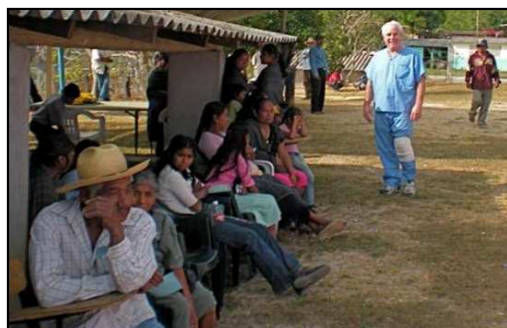
Through its scholarship program, El Niño Rey has assisted hundreds of pre-school and secondary students and their families. Although schools are public, the costs of uniforms, books and school supplies are often enough to prevent students from receiving even a basic education.

Eight hundred and four students currently receive scholarships, or *becas*, representing twenty three different villages in

Guerrero.

ENR also assists the children and young adults attending the special needs school in Quechultenango, providing them with the resources needed for class work, arts and crafts, and physical therapy.

During the first 2010 trip, Maureen Brady and Corina Fitzpatrick will be registering students to receive their *becas*.



Left: A young patient waits to be seen by El Niño Rey dentists. Above: Fr. Bob keeps patients company while they wait to be seen.

Board of Directors

In 2003, the El Niño Rey by-laws established a board of directors to coordinate and oversee the mission of the program.

Many of the original board members remain today, serving on various committees to coordinate the dental trips, guide the scholarship program, maintain relationships with dental professionals and medical suppliers, keep accurate and current data and donor lists, and continue to appeal for grants and further funding.

In July, the board decided to dig deeper into our current dental and educational missions with a look to the future and any new visions that will help in our fundraising and organizational efforts.

El Niño Rey Board Members

Fr. Matt Foley *Director*
Jim Seeberg *President*
John Windlinger *Treasurer*
Maureen Brady
Patti Fitzpatrick
Maureen Garrity
Fr Bob Heinz
Bill Holohan, DDS
Marlo Leaman
Nancy McGovern
Dick Murphy
Jerry Nolan
Jim Orbon, DDS
Peggy Shrader
Fr. Brian Welter
Peter Wittly