

Mission Trip Impact - **The Door** by Bobbi Kinne

We're back, but not completely. I'm talking about St. Mary's Missionaries—the 11 people who went to a poor desert village in central Mexico in March. I'm talking about the students and staff that you, the people of St. Mary's, supported with encouragement, prayers and money, and who you deputized to be your agents of Gospel action. We didn't really know what we were getting into. Sure, we had a general idea. Some of us had gone on mission trips before. This was a new location for St. Mary's mission trips, so we had researched the mission company we were dealing with—read their web page (<http://fmcmissions.com/>) and blogs, looked at their online photos, talked to the Archdiocese of Saltillo, Mexico, to make sure they were legitimate, etc., etc. So we were prepared, in the practical sense. And we prepared ourselves through months of formation meetings to be workers in the vineyard, to have missionary hearts. Yes, we already all knew that there are poor, hungry, thirsty, lonely, ill people in the world, especially in less developed countries. But being poor, and all the pain and suffering that goes with it, had always been a little abstract for us because we have *enough to eat*, we have faucets with *clean drinkable water*, we have *medicine*, we have *cars that work*, we have *air conditioning*. And now, being poor is not so abstract to the St. Mary's missionaries anymore.

We have worked at a place that recognizes Jesus in every person who comes to the door. We have been to a wonderful place that welcomes everyone who knocks. *Hungry? Please, come into the dining room and eat. No shoes? Do any of these donated ones fit? Sick? Will this over-the-counter medication help, is a doctor visit or prescription needed? And, most importantly, may we pray with you?*

At first, we visiting missionaries watched the Family Missions Company missionaries responding to the timid knocks at the door. But we weren't there to just watch. Soon we were opening the door too, swallowing our nervousness, realizing that our low-level Spanish might not be up to the details, but our smiles of welcome and offers of chairs in the shade and glasses of cool water were what was needed at the moment. And our prayers were sincere whether in English, Spanish or mixed.

At our post-trip meeting, we talked about how the trip affected us. The shock of coming face-to-face with real poverty has faded somewhat but the *impact* of opening the door to real people who struggle to survive every day will never leave us. I think each of us left a piece of our hearts in the mission house and with the people who knock on the door. So like I said, we're back, but not completely. And I ask everyone who reads this to pray for missionaries.



St. Mary Missionary, Chris Yakkell stands in front of the door of hope.



St. Mary missionaries pray with Sheila, a full-time missionary, for the health of an ill baby.



The door as seen from inside, deserted in this after-hours photo, but during the day filled with waiting people.