



San Lucas Mission

For nearly 50 years, Fr. Greg Schaefer, a priest from the New Ulm diocese, ran the San Lucas Mission in San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala. Located on the shores of beautiful Lago (Lake) Tolimán, San Lucas and the surrounding communities have benefited from the many supports provided by the Mission. These include schools, including a recently opened Montessori pre-school, a clinic, and a coffee cooperative. A unique project run by the Mission has involved building vented stoves in the homes, eliminating a highly dangerous health hazard that had resulted from the traditional open fire cooking within the home.

St. Thomas Becket began a relationship in 2009, as members of the community participated in a mission trip with a neighboring parish. This two week long immersion experience - working with

the native Mayan and Ladino families, establishing relationships with people from a different culture, and learning first-hand of the philosophy and supports of Fr. Greg's mission - provided each person with a profound sense of what Social Justice looks like. Each year since has provided the opportunity for continued involvement with the mission and the people of San Lucas.

In the Spring of 2009, Tropical Storm Agatha struck Central America, including the San Lucas area. Members of STB stepped up in a big way to provide financial support to help provide immediate needs of water and other life-sustaining supplies.

Since October of 2009, STB parishioners have supported the mission by purchasing Fair Trade coffee from the San Lucas coffee cooperative. Prior to the start of the coop, the local farmers were at the mercy of fluctuating markets and unscrupulous buyers, never knowing if the crop they raised would be sufficient to support their families. Fr. Greg consulted with them, determined with them the price they would need to feed, house and educate their families. This is the price that has been given, regardless of the market prices. The purchases made by STB members supports the farmers in being self-sustaining in providing for their families.

There are many more stories of the Mission and its impact over the past 50 years. You can learn more by visiting the Mission's website at www.sanlucasmision.org.

San Lucas Mission ...

. . . changing lives every day!