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EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WEST TEXAS, WORLD MISSION

Where in the world are we going? Thanks to you...

# The Real Deal: La Gran Familia, Mexico

*“...We have rented a house for the children that we have rescued. Adrianna...has moved to Cuauhtemoc to volunteer for the position of director for the orphanage. She will be living with the tykes and taking care of their basic day to day needs...Alvarro is still very, very underweight. We have treated him with anti-parasitic, have him on a daily vitamin and a lot of good food, but it is difficult for him to gain weight. He has very bad teeth, and it is difficult for him to eat, and I suppose this is a lot of the problem...He has been very withdrawn, but he is slowly coming out of his shadows. We have placed him in our very special school where his teacher said he is thriving, doing well in his studies and is slowly making friends. He teaches us about patience and the power of love to change a life...”* (The Rev. Greg Spinks, September 1999, on the creation of an orphanage that began in his home)

Fr. Spinks had gone to northern Mexico to minister to the impoverished outcasts of society, and that took him to Cuauhtémoc. At an elevation of 7,000 feet, the winters could be brutal. The good padre lived in a two bedroom green house that had a good water heater. Soon the street children and those who lived in very rustic circumstances found that they could go to Fr. Greg’s house to take a warm shower.

Fr. Greg intensely felt God’s call to “the least of these,” and his ministry grew to include the drug addicted and homeless children who lived in the half finished, abandoned buildings in the city. The police took notice of his work and began to bring young boys to him. If he would not take them in, their only alternative was to put them in jail with gown men, many of whom were hardened criminals.

By 2001 there were nine boys sharing the four room house with Fr. Greg. La Gran Familia was born. No one can forget the rainy night that Fr. Greg and the boys were gathered around the table to eat supper. Fr. Greg, in exhaustion, forgot to ask God to bless the food. One of the boys said, “Don’t worry, father, I’ll pray for you,” and he proceeded to thank God for a dry, safe place to live and food to eat and ended with “and send all those who don’t have a place to live to Fr. Greg’s house!”

(contd. on p. 2)

## Upcoming Missions Events:

- *ORDERUP Fund Drive—May 1-September 1*
- *Fishin’ for Mission—June 24 & 25, Rockport*
- *Summer Mission Symposium—Aug. 20, Bp. Jones Center*
- *Arts Festival—Oct. 28-30, St. Francis, San Antonio*
- *Bishops’ Thanksgiving Reception—Nov. 3, San Antonio Country Club*

## News from the Russia Family Homes, St. Petersburg

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There are two new young women in the Girls' Home, Masha (left) and Nadya (right), who were placed in orphanages by their parents. Masha's family didn't want her, and Nadya's parents are alcoholics, so it was easy for them to dispose of their daughters.

When Nadya joined the transitional home after "graduating" from the orphanage, her siblings said she'd betrayed the family—the very ones who'd put her out. Nadya doesn't regret her choice; she doesn't want to live in a place with drinking, various men, and children from "different men" like her sisters. She has become a Christian and is learning to be a cook. She will be moving soon to her own apartment and asks for your prayers.



Masha was discovered in the orphanage by the Family Home mother, Vera. She had a broken leg and couldn't go to school. Her parents never visited her there or in the hospital. Now she is in the Family Home and is good friends with Nadya.

Both girls are part of the local church youth group and work with children from the orphanage. At Easter they cooked lunch for the orphans and had a hunt with eggs stuffed with symbolic items telling the meaning of Easter.

Keep both these girls in your prayers as well as the parents and all members of the transitional homes.

## The Real Deal, contd.

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Fr. Greg was passionate about providing education for the boys. His intent was that the boys be cared for as a family, as he would care for his own children, hence the name *La Gran Familia*. Most of the children had learning disabilities and were sent to a special school that taught the learning disabled. The principal, Goretti Lerma, eventually became director of the orphanage.



The women of the Diocese of Fort Worth were instrumental in the purchase of a two story home not far from the church (where Fr. Greg ministered) that could easily accommodate Fr. Greg and his growing family. The Diocese of West Texas and other churches had helped build the Cristo Rey Church and became instrumental in the financial support of the church and orphanage.

In October 2001, after three years of caring for nine boys and growing Cristo Rey church, Fr. Greg was exhausted. On October 12, 2001, he suffered a heart attack and died. However, the ministries he established continue today. Under Goretti's direction the home has grown to include girls, and another house has been added. *La Gran Familia* today cares for 19 boys and 10 girls. (Glenn Polhemus, Board Chair)

## Loving Honduras a note from Jeannie Loving, missionary to Honduras

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The Honduras Water Ministry just repaired the well in San Lorenzo. As you can see, it was received with enthusiasm. The children are too small to pump, so a bigger person must be there to pump the water. Because of the well's depth, 100+ feet, this water is the purest water in San Lorenzo.



*Every 60 seconds a child dies  
from malaria.*

## New Beginnings from Dori Zubizarreta, missionary to SE Mexico

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This year we decided to combine our two areas of focus into one service. Our little group from Tuxtla came out to the ranch and joined us for our Easter Eucharist and baptisms. We welcomed four teenagers into the faith through baptism. After the service we celebrated the day with chocolate, all kinds of sodas, two huge and delicious cakes, and more chocolate. After all that we had an excellent chicken and rice afternoon meal.

In the middle of all the eating we had a good meeting with the Tuxtla people and plan to start meeting regularly on Sunday evenings.

I had a meeting with some of the teenagers here last night and at least 10 of them signed up for confirmation classes. I know it is not the church in Tuxtla but I believe these young people are the seeds for the church in Chiapas.

We had a family come here yesterday from El Salvador. They had to leave their home with what they had on their backs to escape the Zetas who were demanding money from them. The Zetas beat the man so badly that he has a brain injury and his left hand doesn't work. They have two small children. We fed them, and gave them clothing, including Pedro's brand new Sketcher tennis shoes, and some money. Pedro took them to a hotel where they could bathe and rest a little. It was so sad to see them leave as their chances of safely making it to the States are practically zero. They told me that anything was better than the terror they left behind.

*Hebrews 13:2 (NIV) Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.*

# Upcoming Mission Trips and Prayer List

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May 26-June 4 (Honduras). Water Ministry. Jack Martin, Team Leader. Pamela Haines, Doug Holmes, John Martin, Art Meier, David Spencer, John Villanueva.

May 30-June 16 (Honduras) Angie de los Santos, Team Leader. St. Andrew's (Seguin).  
June 2-12, team: Diane & Dominic Alvarez, Timothy & Linda Beyer, Carol Bryant, Dr. John Compton, Beatriz Gonzales-Martinez, Alicia Herrera, Dr. Jerome Highsmith, Jennifer Killough, Dr. Bill & Sammie Lee, Carole Leissner, Dr. Jon & Tom McAnear, David & Janice Nichols, Dr. William Reeves, Ellen Skapski, Marta Villareal, Deena Walsdorf, Cliff Watkins, Donald Witt.

Summer (TBA). Puerto Rico. Youth trip. Deedee Hudson, Team Leader. Trinity (Victoria).

June 10-July 7 (Guatemala & Honduras). Sally & Mark Keddal, Team Leaders. The Owen Project.

June 22-29 (Honduras). (St. David's, San Antonio). Murry, Samantha, & Victor Mux, Team Leaders. Lisa & Kirk Mason, Sarah Kates, Sandy Carl, Richard Hoepfner, Morgan Hoffman, Vicky Goebel, Sally Hurd, Brittany Bucci.

July (TBA) (Piedras Negras, Mexico). VBS. Bobby Hausser, Amanda Hagy, Team Leaders.

July 1-18. (Goli, Uganda). Threads of Blessing. Helen & Garry Schnelzer, Team Leaders. Bianca & Chris Leonard, Melanie & Julianne Hardie, and Sue Hardaway.

July 6-21. (Goli, Uganda). VBS. Elizabeth Allen, Team Leader. Youth Group from St. Luke's, St. David's, Grace (San Antonio), and St. Alban's (Harlingen): Alexandra & Ashley Alfaro, CC Crowley, Bonnie, Benjamin, & Calvin Giddens, Andrew & Cookie Harris, Natalie Hines, Tally Jorn, Mary Hayden Manning, Trey McCarty, Camilla Morrison, Michael Mortensen, Amy Read, Rev. David Read, George Witte.

July 18-29. (St. Petersburg, Russia, Camp Unistroidal). Trent Timberlake, Team Leader. For information contact Greg Sethness at 822-4160 or [goseth@earthlink.net](mailto:goseth@earthlink.net).

July 28-August 6. (Honduras). Water Ministry. Jack Martin, Team Leader. Pamela Haines, Doug Holmes, John Martin, Art Meier, David Spencer, John Villanueva.

October (TBA) (Viet Nam). Dr. Bill Smith.

October 13-22 (Honduras). Water Ministry. Jack Martin, Team Leader.

PRAY FOR OUR LONG-TERM MISSIONARIES: Olson Family (Philippines), Chapman Family (Liberia), Miller Family (Israel), Alison Barfoot (Uganda), Jeannie Loving (Honduras), Harry Gunkel (Israel), Dori and Pedro Zubizarreta (Mexico), Erin Cottos (Haiti).