



**CFM in ACTION: Tom McDonough, CFM member—St Mary Student Parish in Ann Arbor, MI**  
(Thank you, Karen Burnard, for sharing Tom's story!)

This past spring, I went on a service trip to Guatemala with 11 other parishioners from the St. Mary Student Parish in Ann Arbor. I had no idea the impact this trip would have on me.

We started off traveling in our minibus to the Francisco Coll elementary school. We celebrated Mass and interacted with staff and children. Their smiling faces, infectious energy, and desire to connect with us were so meaningful. We learned that these children's parents work in the local garbage dump gathering refuse that can be recycled for some money. If they are lucky, they might make \$2 to \$4 a day—barely lifting them out of the extreme poverty conditions that impact 1 out of 10 people in the world. They are the poorest of the poor, and unfortunately, some people think of them like the trash they scavenge in.



Then we drove by the dump, and the conditions were worse than I imagined. Besides being dirty and unsafe, we learned there is corruption in the dump as to who gets to pick through the trash coming from the wealthier neighborhoods.



Near the garbage dump, we were taken to International Samaritan's Ave Maria Center, which is an after-school center for students (called scholars) to study, receive supplies, food, and most of all love from the International Samaritan staff who work in this old warehouse building.

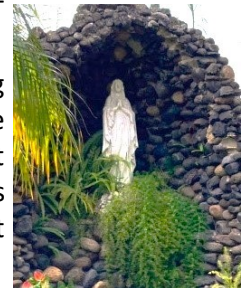
Through a holistic scholarship program, International Samaritan sponsors kids and provides school fees, uniforms, books, transportation, and more. Most of these kids are of Mayan descent and can face discrimination.



We visited the home of one of the scholars, a young man with hopes of becoming an electrician to be able to help his family have a better life.



Before breakfast on Wednesday of our trip week, I felt my heart being pulled to a grotto dedicated to Mary at the Catholic retreat center where we were staying. I stood before Mary and wept. I walked back and forth in front of Mary and asked, why do things have to be this way? Why do these kids and families have to suffer? I was angry and this emotion of sadness is not one I express very well as I'm not one who cries easily.



That same day, we painted the entire walls of the cinder block Ave Maria Center. When the pro-



ject was finished, there was a special inauguration of the new space. Scholars painted one of their palms and pushed it against the newly painted wall. The smiles, pride, and excitement to leave their mark on the building, and for the program, were contagious. The team and I could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit as we spent time in Guatemala. We were able to show our love and receive the love of the beautiful people we met. And yet we all felt that there is still a lot of work we want to do for our brothers and sisters here.

Before we left, I went back to the grotto for one last cry with Mary. However, this time the tears did not come. There was a peace that I felt. I had the opportunity to have my heart broken and now I have the opportunity to take this experience and do something with it. We must live out the resurrection and make a difference to those with whom Christ asks us to be his eyes, his hands, his feet, and his heart. I pray I'm able to do this in a way that God desires. Please pray with me.



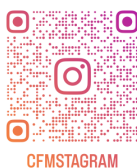
### CFM in Social Media

[Facebook](#)

[cfmtube - YouTube](#)

[Gospel reflections \(cfm.org\)](#)

weekly blog by Dave Thomas



### 185 days till our CFM 75th Anniversary Celebration



This is Mundelein Seminary in the winter—it's a beautiful sight, but it's verrrrry cold! Lucky for us, CFM's 75th year anniversary celebration will be held in the summer from August 3-4, 2024 @ Mundelein Seminary in Illinois. Please visit our website at [75th Anniversary -CFM-USA](#) to register and for additional details.

### JOIN US IN REUNITING OUR PAST WHILE SHAPING THE FUTURE!

#### CFM 75th Anniversary Prayer

Making Friends, Making Disciples, Making a Difference for 75 Years

Father of Mercy, please bless all the preparations leading up to our 75th Anniversary celebration. Grant that the celebration may be a time of grace for all: A time of inspiration for the young, A time of refreshment for the old, A time of renewal for families, A time of healing for the broken, A time of joy for the sorrowing, A time of challenge for the complacent A time of forgiveness for the sinner, A time of homecoming for all who have been away. Jesus save us. Holy Spirit fill us. Mary our Mother pray for us. Father, we ask these things In Jesus' name, Amen.



### LENT: FOCUS ON THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY, FAMILY STYLE! All are welcome!

Lent is always a great time for personal and communal prayer as well as spiritual growth. To help in this year's Lenten journey, CFM is offering a series of 3 online small group discussions on the corporal works of Mercy using the observe/judge/act method. To accommodate multiple time zones, we will meet from 8:00-9:30pm EST. The discussion topics and days/ are as follows:

- Feb 19, Monday - Discussion 1: Feed the Hungry**
- Mar 4, Monday - Discussion 2: Clothe the Naked**
- Mar 18, Monday - Discussion 3: Shelter the Homeless**

These are timely topics for Lent and it will be a great time to gather, reflect, share, and pray about how these works of mercy might become true acts of love to our families, our church, and our neighbor. We will use the very effective Observe, Judge, and Act method, helping us to discover ways to grow in holiness ourselves and as families, and, ultimately bring the light of Christ into our environments. We hope you can join us! Please rsvp to [bjthelen@gmail.com](mailto:bjthelen@gmail.com).

*"It is my burning desire that the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty."*  
**Pope Francis - Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy 2011**

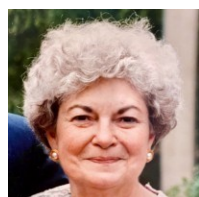


### In Memoriam



**John D. Piatt**

<https://www.wisconsinrapidstribune.com/obituaries/pwix0693036>



**Marilyn Louise Beck**

[Marilyn Beck Obituary - Cremation Center of Kansas City - Shawnee Mission - 2024 \(legacy.com\)](#)

[How To Celebrate As A Catholic When It's Ash Wednesday & St. Valentine's Day - The Catholic Company®](#)

[How to Prepare for Lent— Before It Arrives - Good Catholic](#)

[D-P6870-Lent-FY2024-Activity-Guide.pdf \(crosscatholic.org\)](#)

[Lent 2024: The Complete Guide to the Catholic Season of Lent – Hallow](#)

