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## BELIZE MISSION TRIP INFORMATION

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You are considering a mission trip, may we suggest a trip to help St Peter Claver Parish and the Pallottine Sisters in the Toledo District of Belize?

To help you make up your mind we have prepared the following document and ask that you start with the following prayer.....

*Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion is to take off our shoes for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on another's dream, more serious still, we may forget. .. That God was there before our arrival. Author unknown*



We hope to answer many of your questions in this document but are always available to answer any questions personally. Our next trip is tentatively scheduled for January 18 - January 31, 2020. We also offer a shorter trip that would be only one week. We normally make flight arrangements in August and include trip insurance for all.

## **Mission Purpose:**

The purpose of our trip is to serve St Peter Claver Parish, a parish that also includes 39 smaller parishes scattered in the Villages of the Toledo District of Belize, and the Pallottine Sisters who serve the Toledo District. We also strive to work as a team respectful of each other and all that we meet and work with. We try to learn about the Belizean culture and respect their way of living.

## **Mission Activities:**

We work together generally in group activities involving construction/maintenance of churches and schools; helping in school classrooms, most recently teaching children songs for mass; spending time with senior citizens; and whatever may be needed on a given day. We often go into plan B or beyond as the days go along, last year it was creating "sipper bucket" for plants. Our days are full and work is varied with something for all.

## **Mission Size:**

Our mission trips are limited to 12 or 13 people for logistical reasons as we travel in Belize. We rent a 12 passenger van with a driver to get around. There is typically a mix of new and old people on the trip and the size of the trip generally shrinks for the second week. The ages range from the twenties to the seventies with most being toward the top of that range.

## **Getting There**

We generally leave Milwaukee early on Saturday morning, fly to Houston about 2 1/2 hours and then fly to Belize City about 2 1/2 hours and the ride a chartered bus for 5 hours or so getting to Punta Gorda around 9:00 at night. The Sisters have a light snack and we crash

## **There - Nazareth Retreat Center**

The Pallottine Sisters have retreat center on the outside of Punta Gorda where we stay. They have 10 double sleeping rooms, each with 2 beds and 2 communal shower rooms a dining area and two sitting rooms where we share experiences and an occasional Belekin beer or soda. The building is very clean and perfectly safe and everyone treats us so well. Regina and Desiree cook for us and answer a myriad of questions we may have. The Sisters make us feel like family too. We ask the meals be Belizean and they are very good, many actually gain weight. We have three meals a day as they also pack us lunch. They will also accommodate any special needs you may have.

## **Typical Day**

6:00 The Sisters ring a bell and they go to mass in Punta Gorda leaving at 6:15, we are welcome to join them and will be back for breakfast, we always have coffee ready by 6:00

7:30 Breakfast in the Dining room, one person has a prayer of choice then we recite a common meal prayer.

8:00 get in Van for job/activity for the day

3:30- 4:00 clean up and leave job/activity site

5:00 - 6:00 shower and Belekin/soda and snack time

6:00 - 6:30 supper, occasionally old friends come by and explain what they are doing and share the meal with us.

After supper a short reflection on the day and thoughts for tomorrow, this is a time when when get to know each other better.



## **Work week and free time**

We generally work all week days, occasionally depending on where we are and what we are doing we may visit a ruin or last year we went swimming one afternoon at a national park. On weekends we try to relax, many go fishing, some go to the market and a Mayan ruin, usually the group decides on a couple of things and you choose, you can also veg at the retreat center if you wish. Saturday night we usually go out for a nice meal as a group after mass. That way we will be free on Sunday morning to take those leaving this the airport and then find something to do in the afternoon or just relax.

## **Communications with the real world**

In Punta Gorda there are two Internet cafes, one with a reasonable Internet phone service. Punta Gorda is the same time zone as we are. Several people have taken out monthly international phone

service with mixed results, and texting often works! If you mail something, Regina has a post office in her home, it may take anywhere from one week to three weeks.



### **General costs and timing**

The trip costs between \$1500 and \$1700 for two weeks , slightly less for a week, which includes travel, room and board, Saturday night supper and most expenses. People generally take between \$200 to \$300 for gifts and crafts. People often take one credit card, remember to explain you will be in Belize. Since we purchase airplane tickets in late August or early September we generally ask for the funds then.

### **Parting Thought:**

One of the ladies that went twice, once with her granddaughter when she was in her late 70's said.... "I can't tell you whether to go or not but I can tell your life will never be the same if you do go" ....

**For more information and details please contact one of the following:**

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