

Table Notes from the January 28th Reflection Day on Twinning: “Remaining Faithful”

Mutuality: What questions should we be asking ourselves so that our twinning honors mutuality?

- Is what we want to do, something they want done?
- Why are we doing this?
- What do the people of the community want (not necessarily what the leader/pastor wants done.)
- In order of importance, what are your community needs?
- How much do I focus on the relationship rather than the preparation, what will I do?
- What are the names of the people I met?
- What are the stories I heard?
- How to process the experiences people have when visiting our partners?
- Are the people in our sister parish gaining as much as we?
- From what angle do we look? Do we look down at them , up at them, level with them? Do we look eye to eye with them?
- Before we go, do we take time to learn the needs of the people?
- What have we done together with the people?
- Do we truly respect and listen to each other?
- Do we know what is going on in our sister parish?
- Do we start gaining that concept in our own parish by knowing each other?
- Do we hare ourselves with them i.e. our stories, newsletters, pictures, person-to-person mail?
- Do we effectively share our mission experience with our home parish so they can know people as individuals, their values, and challenges?
- What do we share with our hosts and what do they share with us?
- Are we careful not to force our culture on our hosts?
- How can we help in a way that they really want us to?
- Are we developing relationships?
- Are we organizing time together?
- Are we sensitive to the people?
- Are we realistic in our goals?
- Are we going with a servant's heart?
- Are we informing and involving our people back home?
- Are we going to be faithful?

Social Analysis: What methods or tools do you use to understand the realities of life for your Twinning partners?

- Change news source (broadcast news, not adequate) i.e. internet, public TV etc
- Education: How is my country linked to this one?
- Get to know what is going on in the village/location of our sister parish.
- Give some history of your sister parish to your parishioners
- What are issues of people you are creating a relationship with? What are our issues?
- Learn about the political situation in the local community of our twin,
 - through the internet, local business people, and local professional people who are knowledgeable about social and government issues
 - from perspectives of the poorest to the wealthiest in the community
- What do we want to hear today?
 - How can we prepare for our twinning experience?
 - How we gain the most from our experience in our reflections?
- What can we take back from today?
 - We need to do more to involve more people in twinning by more and better communication
- What is going on in this society which may oppress them?
- Maintain associations that are truly experienced with countries we mission to.

Accountability: What questions do you keep before you and your parish as a reminder of your commitment to solidarity with your Twinning partner?

- What do we do to keep our parish enthusiastic about our twinning relations?
- Do we keep our parishioners informed on what was experienced on these trips?
- Do we pray for our sister parish?
- Do we create awareness for the mission?
- What do we do to involve our whole parish in the relationship and understanding of the people in our twin parish?
- How do we build solidarity in our own parish with other ethnic groups such as Hispanic, using our twinning experience?
- Do you ever abandon your best friend?

Accountability continued:

- How do we make a commitment within your parish to continue this twinning relationship? (explaining that this is a forever relationship not short term)
- “Breaking Bread” tidbits in a church bulletin about mission (what it means to be in a twinning relationship.)
- How do we include our parish community in learning about our sister parish?
- Selling Christmas ornaments made by our sister parish to help fund committees.
- How do we educate our parishioners about issues that affect our sister parishes?
- How do we consistently communicate with the parish?
- How do we continue to educate our parish about what solidarity really means?
- What are we doing to continue to keep us to date on issues that affect our sister parish?
- Can we have a bulletin article every week regarding our twinning partner?
- How to emphasize a permanent connection with the sister parish, for example annual trips there and for the people here.
- Do you meet the people of just do service?
- Are we using the resources for service rather than for ourselves?
- How do we combine “doing with” and “being with?”
- How do we know we are talking to the correct person or people who know the broader needs?
- What do we do in Milwaukee so the people know the needs of the twinning communities?
- What can we do to make their lives better on a long term basis
- How can we make our parish aware? Ongoing discussions of what we can do.
- Can we create prayer intentions for the real needs of the people in our twinning relationship.
- How do my choices affect them (sweatshops, clothing labels..)
- Am I calling for political change?
- Share hopes and dreams of both places
- On our parish bulletins, can we have pictures of both parishes?

Action: What does solidarity look like in your parish?

- Solidarity looks like unity amidst the struggle
- Solidarity is falling passionately in love with our sister community.
- Solidarity looks like social justice.
- Solidarity looks like we are in union around the table of the Eucharist.
- Solidarity is continuing, outgoing, permanent relationship.
- Presentations of what was done as a mission
- Letters from twinning parish read at Mass
- Letters to families put in a box so all are aware of communication
- Bulletin notices
- Giving tree.
- Visitors from our twinning parish
- Ongoing discussion in mission committee of what we can do
- Sharing the wisdom they have offered us
- Sometimes worship like they do: song, dance
- Advocacy work: getting visas and have politicians meet our visitor
- Both parishes hang banners within worship space with articles from their partner such as, altar clothes, cross from the other culture, petitions praying needs of partner and or both communities, communion cup and baskets
- Eucharistic ministers wear a cross from partner community
- Display at entrance to the Church which is changed frequently to share the activities of the sister parish/community
- Periodic educational programs regarding importance of solidarity and sistering partnerships
- The priest from twinning parish comes occasionally to co-minister all the masses at our parish
- Containers shipped, black board, pens, notebooks, tennis shoes, underwear
- Women sew skirts, dresses, shorts, tote bags, blankets
- People write letters – pen pals
- 8th graders raised \$15,000 to dig a well
- Poster boards with pictures of trips
- Made note cards out of pictures children in twinning parish drew
- Offer cash for scholarships
- Videos of our school children sent and then received one of twinning parish
- Book stand on altar made by people in other culture
- Action alerts to whole parish regarding what affects them: (immigration, free trade, water wars.)
- Hands on banner sent to sister parish and returned with children's hands from there, on display in sanctuary
- Slow the pace Sunday to experience part of their culture

Ownership: How have you helped the members of the community feel a part of the Twinning relationship?

- Shared trip with parishioners at Mass
- Shared with public schools
- Opened up to those outside the parish
- Communication: new articles, DVDs, videos, PowerPoint, poster boards, website, music, reports on projects, visits,
- Involved people and students in sewing, crocheting, letter writing, making crafts, quilts, baptismal white cloth, banners, altar cloths
- Sold crafts/coffee/other products brought back
- Prayer partners matched one person back home with one in twinning parish, exchange photos
- Pastor from partner will work with pastors from here on retreat
- Shared visuals and stories with children and high school students
- Lending library includes material on country where twinning partner is located
- Picture exchange
- Consistent bulletin/newsletter updates
- Sang same songs in both places, offertory petitions
- Commission art for church decorations
- Provide rosary string/wire and beads
- Included in Stewardship commitment cards sent yearly to all parishioners
- Education/formation from pulpit
- Parish fundraiser for anyone to go i.e. "meal deal" = meal and PowerPoint, meal may be typical of the culture of the twinning place, or something like spaghetti
- Invited parishioners to host guests from host countries for not less than two nights (committee members DO NOT)
- Planned trips well in advance and encourage youth participants
- Photo exchange between youth of both parishes: what is important to them
- Sent 2000 baseball caps
- Mission appeal with representative from twinning partner
- Lay witnessing/sharing personal stories about experiences with twinning partners
- School children sponsored scholarships for high school and raised funds for school supplies
- Religious education classes incorporate education about twinning partner in classes and have a room dedicated to the country where parish is located
- Collection and distribution of container goods, Family to family boxes included
- Lenten project: cups with pictures sold for fundraising, or special theme: clean water, education etc.
- Petitions at Mass
- Offertory baskets from the twinning place
- Members of twinning committee need to rotate to engage other parishioners
- Encourage different trip participants, rather than same ones going
- Fundraising for people to go on trips, so not only "haves" go and also all who go will be representatives from parish and have responsibility to report back to parish

Long-term relationship: What are ways that you have found to keep "Twinning" fresh and exciting over time?

- Plan trips way in advance
- Parish newsletter with communication as to what is happening in sistering. (monthly/quarterly)
- Petitions during prayer of the faithful at Mass
- Bulletin articles/stuffers
- Banners and displays
- Sponsor families, or a teacher for the community school.
- Share experience with parish and talk about supporting the dreams and goals of sister parish. Youth especially impacted by the visit to sister parish
- Support and listen to those who travel
- Altar clothes, vestments, carvings, displays, symbols, flag, offering baskets in worship space
- Maps and pictures in parish buildings
- Website include sister parish
- Missionaries share story in other settings
- Pastor/Deacon preaching
- Other (than committee) people initiating ideas/donations
- Annual calendar of recurring twinning events
- Keep encouraging youth
- Lending library
- Remember sister parish on special occasions
- All people have apart (donate, pray, go, help pay for someone else to go)

Long-term relationship: continued

- Specific tasks:
 - drive delegates to airport
 - ecumenical spin-off/advocacy
 - giving tree: adopt/purchase for person/family described
- Keep before us:
 - Who is God calling me to be?
 - What is God calling this mission to be?
- Use Media

Parish Integration: If we visited your parish today, how would we know that you are in a Twinning relationship?

- Much of the above
- Every day must include prayer, reflection, processing
- Spanish on marquee
- Add twinned parish name to outside church sign and bulletin cover
- Scrap book in visible place
- Visible as one enters parish buildings
- Walk into Mass with sister parish banner

Individual Integration: How have you helped group members to live mission "here" in a way that honors their Twinning experience?

- Space/assistance to:
 - Reflect on what did I learn about myself
 - heal hurts
 - deal with the pieces in a healthy way
 - identify integrations in personal life
 - commission to go, commissioned upon return (rather than go in pageantry return in mystery)
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- Open enrollment as far as a person can pay
- Parish program for reviewing mission trips
- Regular meetings open to all parishioners for planning etc.
- Engage in other parish activities
- Talk with other parishioners who haven't visited
- Channel energy people bring back, let them organize and volunteer and try new projects even if not most efficient