

EXTENDED-TERM MISSIONS

Pre-Discernment Document

Greetings, fellow pilgrim! We would like to begin with a hearty ‘thank you!’ for your openness to serving God in such an incredible and sacrificial manner. We have put together this document—based on our history of serving in the missions and the many who have engaged this process—to help those discerning service with the Missioners of Christ in Honduras. Our hopes are that, in being transparent about the rigors, difficulties, and expectations in serving with us, the individual who is called to a ministry *other than* the Missioners can recognize that early in the process. As such, even a discernment to *not* to serve with us (or even ‘not now’), we still consider a ‘win-win’, as our desire is for you to be where God desires you to be.

We truly believe God gives a specific calling to each of His children to serve Him; we see *our* responsibility being to assist and support any inquirer in discerning whether this specific ministry in Honduras is what they are called to. For this reason, we consider this a *mutual discernment* process. We prayerfully walk this journey with you and—based on our past experience as well as our prayerful sense of where God is leading—strive to make our best prudential judgment in inviting those we sense are called. We’d like to emphasize two points in this matter; first, we recognize that we will be imperfect in this discernment—it is very possible that we will invite people who are not called, as well as fail to invite those who are. Still, we trust God that, if we do our best in good faith, He will bless both the decision and outcome. Second, our decision *not* to invite an individual to serve with us in an extended-term capacity often has to do with our recognition of our *own* limitations. We recognize that we are only equipped to handle a certain number of missionaries with only a certain degree of personal challenges as an excessive focus on internal Community problems will greatly hinder us in carrying out our mission in Honduras.

All this being said, we ask that if you *do* decide to enter into the discernment process with us, that you see it as just that; asking God if this is the specific ministry He is calling you to at this specific time in your life. In that, receiving a “not here/not now” response from discernment will be an acknowledgement that another door is being opened for you in God’s path for your life (whether it is currently evident or not). For this reason, *we strongly encourage all applicants to be actively applying to other faithful Catholic apostolates in addition to the Missioners* (we keep a listing of some we recommend if you desire it). Keeping your options open gives the Holy Spirit more room to work!

Commitment

We are currently accepting applications for [Summer 2019](#). Extended-Term Missioners commit to a minimum of two years of service; as Bishop Camilleri of Comayagua, Honduras shared, *“One year given is for oneself. Two years is for Honduras.”* If you are looking for something shorter-term, please consider our summer mid-term mission, or one of our short-term missions throughout the year.

Catholic Identity

We are unabashedly Catholic Christian, fully submitting to the Teaching Authority of the Catholic Church, to the Holy Father, and to the local bishop and pastors wherever we serve. It has been our experience that, if an individual wants to serve with us, yet maintains strong beliefs contrary to certain Teachings of the Church (artificial contraception, sexual morality, women’s ordination, etc.) they have found participation in this particular ministry to be exceptionally difficult, potentially becoming a source of division within the Community. We in no means promote blind acceptance—yet if the stage of a person’s faith journey has them still struggling against the Teaching Authority of the Catholic Church, this particular mission would not be a good fit for them.

Form of Ministry

Our mission is centered in evangelization and discipleship. We engage in very few work projects, and generally the only thing we attempt to build is the Kingdom of God. While there are many different roles in the Missioners in Honduras, *all* participate in our evangelization and discipleship in one way or another. This includes home visits (sometimes door-to-door), teaching, running ministry programs, public speaking, and the like. You will no doubt be drawn out of your comfort zone, and you have to be open to this form of 'being stretched'. As some say, "*being flexible and adaptable are not enough; you have to be fluid.*" As well, if you are used to being the 'lead' in public ministry and such, you must to have the humility to accept 'less-public' support roles, if that is asked of you.

Authority Structure

As we function as a Catholic Christian Community, obedience and submission for the common good of the Missioners Community and the greater Church is absolute necessity. We live a structured community life, similar to a religious order, which complements our rhythm of service and ministry. There is an authority structure in place within the Missioners that allows us to function in concert with the Diocese, other local Catholic religious orders, and the people we serve. The Missioners of Christ functions under and with the permission of the local Bishop, where we have established canonical status in the Diocese of Comayagua. In deciding to serve with us, you are agreeing to work under our authority structure.

Mental and Physical challenges

The life in the mission is both physically and mentally rigorous. A missionary-in-training's physical/medical challenges tend to exacerbate themselves in Honduras, so a condition of any significance will very possibly preclude you from serving in this particular mission. All who serve extended- or long-term with the Missioners are required to complete a physical exam and be cleared by a doctor for serving in a third world country. As well, we have found that our own limitations, in addition to the harsh lifestyle, community life, and exposure to difficult life realities, tend to aggravate mental health issues. Even those who do not have identified emotional challenges find the mission experience very trying; every weakness, insecurity, and past hurt tend to emerge during their time of service. While it is true this can be a first step in spiritual and emotional healing, when you already have significant mitigating mental health struggles, a foreign mission (especially one as "young" as ours) is not the best place to work these issues out.

Prayer at the Center

We pray incessantly! Every day has about 3½ hours of prayer (including Mass). For many initially, this can be quite challenging... but after serving with us for several months, most agree it is barely enough! While some may think, "*that is too much time praying, we need to do more active serving!*" this misses the central point of our mission; this is not *our* work, it is God's work, and our ability to do something good for the people of Honduras is directly correlated to our ability to seek God's will, to hear His voice, and to allow Him to use us as His instruments to build His Kingdom. As Blessed John Paul II put it, we seek to be "*contemplatives in action.*"

In closing, there is much more to tell you and share about the mission, but we feel this initial information will be helpful to many who would sense that God is calling them to something *different* than this particular ministry. If you do still sense, after reading this and prayerfully reflecting on it, that God may be prompting you in this direction, please initiate the registration process online using the Extended-Term link at <https://missions.missioners.org/>.

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