



CONQUERING POVERTY *with the Richness of Our Catholic Faith*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Catholic World Mission works to improve safety of Catholic school children in an impoverished and gang-ridden area of Mexico.

A Catholic school in Monterrey, Mexico has been plagued by vandalism and neighborhood gangs ever since Hurricane Alex blew into town two years ago, destroying the school's protective wall. Thanks in part to Catholic World Mission donors a new structure will be in place in early 2013 for the Mano Amiga (Helping Hand) school.

Without the deterrent of a wall or protective fence, students and staff at Mano Amiga La Cima are at risk daily due to gang and drug-related activity in the adjacent town. Administrators arrive at the school nearly every morning to see more destruction of school property. Vandals regularly cut the line to the school's water supply. In addition, the trespassers break walls, destroy toilet stalls and take petty cash, if there is any to be had.



“We really don't have anything of value in this school,” says school principal, Gilberto Garcia Valenzuela. We cannot have computers or costly equipment here, as it would surely be stolen. The children learn the old fashioned way, with good teachers and supplies they bring with them each morning.”

While thieves are not profiting on the destruction, they appear intent on destroying property. School officials have been forced to stop making repairs until the fence goes into place. Continual repairs have been costly and time-consuming.

“We are committed to providing a peaceful atmosphere in which students can study and make a better future for themselves,” said Mr. Garcia. “The goal of Mano Amiga schools is to provide a safe haven from negative influences and help families break the generational cycle of poverty through the solid foundation of Catholic education. We are grateful for the partnership we have with Catholic World Mission to help us achieve these goals.”





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Catholic World Mission Executive Director Rick Medina, based in Atlanta, visited the school last spring. “It is heart-breaking to see the senseless destruction that happens on a daily basis. Once I saw the situation first-hand, I became committed to making the \$30,000 project a reality. The faculty, staff and families of Mano Amiga La Cima work tirelessly to provide children with the tools they need to build a better future for themselves and their communities. This school has been a very positive influence on the area and is a much-needed institution here. We will do everything possible to remove obstacles to protection of the children,” said Medina.

The protective fencing will surround the buildings, play yard and offices. The structure will stand 3 meters high, with the first meter constructed of cement and bricks. A 2-meter high fence will stand atop the cement foundation, providing a significant deterrent for vandals.

Mano Amiga La Cima is one of three Mano Amiga schools in the Monterrey area, in the northeastern state of Nuevo Leon. Juxtaposed against the wealthy backdrop of tourist attractions and luxury hotels, M.A. La Cima is located in the colony of San Pedro 400, where gangs and drug dealers have become a growing influence in recent years.



The project will be funded in partnership by Catholic World Mission and matching donors in the Monterrey area.

Catholic World Mission has been an ongoing supporter of Mano Amiga schools since 1998. Within the past year, Catholic World Mission has provided full scholarships to 180 students in the 37-school system throughout Latin America and the Philippines.

The first Mano Amiga school opened in Mexico City in 1963 in response to financial, educational and social problems in that area. The system has succeeded in bringing positive momentum to struggling communities, providing high quality Catholic education to children in extremely poor neighborhoods.



Mano Amiga Catholic schools provide an oasis from poverty and insecurity for families in dozens of impoverished communities. Building on a philosophy of love and faith in the human spirit, the schools have educated more than 21,000 children, with 85% of graduates going on to institutes of higher learning--many giving back to their communities.

“The construction of this fence represents the defense of hope for a better life for these students and communities,” said Medina.

Catholic World Mission is a fund-raising organization supporting global projects within the pillars of education, evangelization, medical missions and disaster relief. Within the past year Catholic World Mission has provided famine relief in Africa, sponsorship of 60 missionaries in Mexico, and shipments of supplies for medical missions-- in addition to its work for Mano Amiga. Catholic World Mission is a 501c3 religious non-profit organization sponsored by the Legion of Christ, offering 92% of every dollar raised to support missionary projects. Please see www.catholicworldmission.org and Catholic World Mission on Facebook for more information.