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Mission Statement

St. Juan Diego Women’s Center helps young women in unplanned pregnancies and their unborn babies. We uphold the sacredness of life through our caring counselors, who provide education, emotional, and material support in a safe and loving Catholic environment. At St. Juan Diego Women’s Center, everyone who walks through our door is always welcomed and treated like family. As such, we offer continued support to help mothers not only during, but also after their pregnancy.

AFRICA - AN EXCITING NEW MISSION

At our last successful banquet, two video testimonies particularly impressed our guests. They were done by two African priests—Fr. Maurice Igboerika who was an abortion survivor himself raised by his grandmother in Nigeria and Fr. John Ngbapia, rector of the seminary in South Sudan of the Yambio-Tombura diocese and pro-life organizer. How Juan Diego met both priests was nothing short of remarkable. Fr. John was featured three years ago on LifeSite News and Fr Maurice is completing his Master's degree in Berkeley and is in residence in San Jose.

What started as a casual friendship between us became a true to life collaboration between their pro-life efforts and ours. After mobilizing to save a few mothers from an abortion in their countries, both priests have formally established their own pro-life organizations in their countries,—the Juan Diego Pro-life Society in Nigeria and the St Josephine Pregnancy Life Support Services in war ravaged South Sudan.

How could we have imagined that even as we labeled ourselves a "Center without Borders" because we ventured out to other counties outside San Jose to help pregnant mothers, that we would go way beyond our borders across the ocean to Africa? South Sudan, in particular, is significant because it is a landlocked Christian nation surrounded by Muslim countries and is the last stronghold for Christianity in that continent. Both Nigeria and S Sudan are fertile ground to evangelize as well as to impart the pro-life message. These nations are particularly under attack by western organizations that seek to destroy their culture of life through abortion, often clandestinely subverting their pro-life laws. It is an awesome prospect to be virtual missionaries in these countries through our outreach. At this time, the two priests that had long seen the coercive onslaught of the international pro-abortion forces on their nations are jubilant that those activities are coming to an end. These organizations will soon be defunded.

We'd like to share a few stories of mothers that have benefitted by our support:

Patricia was marginalized by her village after having her baby out of wedlock and was rejected by her own family. Through our financial and emotional support, she came out of her depression and found her worth as a single mother. She now reaches out to other mothers that are afraid to choose life in her culture where such mothers are shunned. Her search for them has taken her to prisons, hospitals and the community. Just recently, the birth of a little baby to Oluchi, has brought Patricia such joy for her loving efforts to support the new mother.

Mary, a young teenage mother brought to Fr Maurice's stepmother because she had no place to go, was lovingly nurtured and cared for until she delivered her baby. Her parents welcomed Mary home after her baby was born.

Two other abortion bound mothers in Nigeria have been counseled and supported by Fr Jude who heads the newly formed St Juan Diego Prolife Society and await their babies.

It is our center's goal to set these mothers up in income generating enterprises so they may become self sufficient.
In South Sudan, Christine Natale, saved by the St Josephine Bakhita Pregnancy Life Support Center led by Fr John Ngpabia, delivered Joshua Alex last month.

Julia, whose husband was lost in the war and was thinking of having an abortion to better care for her two other children, chose life after talking to our counselor, Monica. We are supporting her though this difficult time. She is 7 months pregnant.

Wilma, a student and scholar, courageously chose life even as she may lose her college scholarship, after speaking to our counselor, Monica.

Hossana would be considered a “hard case” as she is afflicted with the AIDS virus though, gratefully, her other children were born without the disease. She was abortion minded but decided to have her baby through our reassurance of providing medical assistance and support for her family because she is unable to look for casual labor.

These are but a few stories that we share with you. Their haunting faces speak volumes. Through our small efforts, these wonderful women have found the courage to have their babies through the most difficult circumstances. In the midst of a senseless war, poverty and civil strife, these little babies emerge as signs of hope and light. This is the sure sign that God's grace abounds in the midst of chaos.

It is a rare privilege for us to be an instrument to show that we are truly members of one family; babies in Africa are as valuable as babies in California. Paradoxically it is easier to save babies in a culture that sees value in children and family in spite of deprivations than in a materialistic culture that sees children as a burden.

To our wonderful supporters who are moved to participate in this exciting mission, we invite you to contribute to our Africa Fund. A little goes a long way as these mothers’ needs are so basic. We are delighted to personally share our heartwarming experiences and inspiring new developments with you.
As I write this, it is a countdown until our beloved director, Willie, steps away from his desk as our center's director. Images flood my mind recalling the many experiences we shared with our mothers and fathers while they navigated obstacles and fears on their way to parenthood. Choosing life was not only the first step towards bringing new life into the world but also our challenge to bring them the reassurance, guidance and confidence that they needed to find the peace they searched for. This goes without saying that when we did go the extra mile, even as we were unsure of the outcome ourselves, God did work his splendid miracles too numerous to count to show us that all we had to do was step up.

Walking some years ago towards a seedy motel past strip joints and bars to visit a mother in a vice-ridden San Francisco neighborhood is hard to forget. She was going through withdrawals to try to make good on her resolve to kick the habit for the sake of her unborn baby. With trepidation, we also wondered how years of drug use would affect her baby. I remember vividly how Willie sat by her side to painstakingly teach her the rosary to sustain her through her moments of despair. She made good on her resolve. Willie also visited her boyfriend in jail to encourage him to take on his responsibility as a father while I waited and prayed in the car because that was clearly a one-man job. Years later, the stable couple now free of drugs, live in a beautiful tree-lined neighborhood in a lovely apartment far away from the Tenderloin district that nearly destroyed them. They have two healthy children today and there is still no end to the blessings they receive.

I recall how an abortion minded Chinese couple mistakenly took us for the Planned Parenthood next door when they came to our center for a pregnancy test. The young father was afraid to lose his work visa when he lost his job. Not only did he receive 3 job offers after he and his wife decided to keep their baby but they also got rides to all their prenatal appointments, hospital delivery and countless driving lessons from Willie until the young father finally passed his driving test and no longer needed to ride his bike to a work. Today, the family lives their American dream with a new home, two cars and three children.

Willie took the place of the absent father to the many young people that came to our center. He was the masculine, protective voice for our moms that had no fathers at home and the firm but encouraging voice for the young boyfriends or husbands that were afraid to take responsibility. It was not uncommon to hear him say, "Man up. Real men take responsibility!"

A quadruple bypass four years ago did not deter Willie from prematurely hurrying back to his desk to take on the promotion of the RU486 abortion pill reversal after hearing about it for the first time. I'll never forget his excited but nervous call to tell me there was a young woman that had changed her mind about the abortion pill and we had to act quickly. A grateful Emily gave her moving testimony in gratitude at our banquet a year later and showed off her beautiful son. Her lovely face graces a billboard in San Francisco across the street from an abortion facility declaring that the abortion pill can be reversed. But it didn't stop there. A relentless Willie persevered in promoting the reversal treatment resulting in three local pregnancy centers that now provide or facilitate the progesterone treatments.

There was no job too small (speaking at a Confirmation class) or too big (taking on pro-life projects in Africa) for Willie to take on to save babies, no cost too large. He never hesitated to write a personal check if he felt it necessary to help someone in need beyond our center's responsibility—such as buying a motorbike for a Nigerian mother to commute to her little business with her baby or send a monthly contribution to another mother that was marginalized and abandoned by her family. Even as I rolled my eyes at a daunting project I thought impossible, he'd say, "Don't worry...Our Lady will make it happen", "God will take care of it" or "St Joseph will find the money". And he was right—faith can move mountains. At our Juan Diego Center, faith has moved mountains through his leadership. There is so much more to add but this inadequate little tribute can serve to express the spirit of this humble man that stepped away from his engineering profession to take on something far more significant. As our recent banquet speaker described, he found his "Purpose".

Willie, you've been my alter ego, "partner in crime", preventer of burn-out, mentor, kindred spirit and best friend on our pro-life journey. You may no longer be behind your desk but you'll never be away from your pro-life mission. I look forward to continue working with you on special projects as volunteers and to rejoice together over new babies and new mothers saved from an abortion. You'll have to wait for your gold watch in Heaven when you can finally truly retire.

From the Desk of Willie Lapus:

A New Chapter

Last year, 2016 has been a very memorable year. It was the 30th anniversary of our center. A year filled with challenges, blessings and miracles. In the past 30 years, 11,654 families have been helped and 851 babies have been saved from abortion. The JDS center played a major part in establishing two new Medical Pregnancy Resource Centers. It has also been the spearhead in the Abortion Pill Reversal campaign in Northern California. And true to our motto of "being "A center without borders": the St. Juan Diego Women’s Center has established a foothold in Nigeria and South Sudan. With our assistance, a dozen babies have already been saved from abortion by the St. Juan Diego Pro-Life Society in Nigeria and the St. Bakhita Pregnancy & Life Support Center in South Sudan.

We give thanks to God for His providential care throughout the three decades. We also would like to acknowledge the love and guidance of our Directress, Our Lady of Guadalupe. Everything we have accomplished is due to her intervention. All that we strive for; the only thing we can hope, is to be her faithful messenger like our patron St. Juan Diego.

It is with mixed emotion of anxiety, sadness and excitement that I venture into a new chapter in my life. I cannot fully express the gratitude I have for our Juan Diego family. Thank you for comforting me during my time of bereavement. Thank you for all the support and encouragement during my time of crisis and uncertainty. I close this chapter in my life with the fervent prayer which I normally end my letters:

*May Our Lady of Guadalupe keep the St. Juan Diego Women’s Center under her mantle of love.*
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