

Dear Parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua,

My name is Elizabeth Dawyot and I am a parishioner here at St. Anthony's. During this past summer, I had the opportunity to tell our parish about a medical mission trip to Ecuador I was attending over my spring break. I just returned from Ecuador this past week, so in the midst of settling back into school and American life, I wanted to immensely thank you for your time, charitable generosity, and prayerful support through this amazing time in my life.



The preparation of this trip was very demanding with fundraising and remaining in a constant state of prayer; knowing that my church back at home was supporting me gave me rest and faith that God would prepare me rightly to do His will in Ecuador. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to talk about this trip to you all because this mission trip is so important to me. Mission work is where I found my faith, so I felt extremely humbled & honored to be able to share something that I am so passionate about with my church — where every one is dedicated to bringing each other closer to Christ either in the church building or across the globe.

The opportunity to do mission work in the small remote villages of the Amazon was God asking me to say 'yes' to His will, to being uncomfortable, and to trusting our Holy Mother every moment of



every day. From the first day in the jungle, my group hiked two hours in extreme temperatures, two feet of mud, and incredibly strong rain storms - so right from the start, I knew God would use this week to teach me how to rely solely on faith. When my team arrived at the village we set up medical clinics, pharmacies, and retreats for the villagers. The doctors patiently took their time on each individual, not just prescribing the correct drug, but focusing on a holistic, long term care — from learning how to purify their water to praying with each person after their appointment. Furthermore, the priests and nuns were profoundly

inspirational; their strong devotion to their faith poured out onto the children, who simply wanted to see and experience the love and joy that is God.

Meditating on the Marian virtues throughout the week, I strived to stay in that state of prayer through difficulties because I saw that every physical act was a faithful step to the people we were serving. Working in the villages was such a blessing, but also a wake up call because my prayers were being answered in radical ways. I personally was ready to be uncomfortable with not showering or not having a bed, but God pushed me to be uncomfortable in such different ways. When felt unprepared, I was asked to give talks about Our Lady & her beautiful virtues; I conquered language barriers & loved teenage girls who were already mothers by age 13. While faced with these challenges, I felt the presence Mary & the Holy Spirit radically change my heart & theirs.

I cannot truly thank you enough, but it was with your support that I was able to do the Christ's work in Ecuador, and for that I am eternally grateful. I'd like to humbly thank you for your prayers and donations; this joy-filled trip would not have been possible without your help.

Please keep the people of Ecuador in your prayers as God works in their hearts. I will continue to pray for you all and our beautiful parish. If you would like to ask me any personal questions about my trip and future mission trips, please do not hesitate! (emdawyot@gmail.com)

Again, thank you for all your selfless support.

En Su Paz (In His Peace), Elizabeth Dawyot