

ST. THOMAS MISSION

A Publication of the Chaldean Archdiocese of Erbil



"The ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son. The disciples are to live in unity with one another, remaining in the Father and the Son, so that the world may know and believe (cf. Jn 17:21-23)."

**St. John Paul II,
Mission of the
Redeemer, 23.**

St. Thomas Mission: What is It?

by Alex McKenna

"Thomas answered Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" (John 20:28). St. Thomas Mission follows the footsteps of our namesake literally and spiritually. Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq) is the land where St. Thomas catechized and before that the home of Abraham. Today, the spiritual fruits of his first converts remain in the faithful who belong to the Chaldean Catholic Church. After unbelievable trials under ISIS, Archbishop Bashar Matti Warda, the local ordinary turned his sights toward providing an orthodox education and radical encounter with Christ to the young students of his see. From that vision, St. Thomas Mission was born. Today, seven American teachers from Franciscan University of Steubenville and Christendom College live and work in Erbil, Iraq at Mar Qardakh International School. Our job is simple: educate the next generation of Chaldean leaders and share with them the love of Christ just as St. Thomas did hundreds of years before.



PHOTO BY ELIZABETH ALVA

Meet a Missionary: Myranda

Myranda Stawowczyk is from the beautiful state of Virginia and graduated from Franciscan University of Steubenville in 2020 with degrees in theology and catechetics. With a passion for evangelization and a love of beauty, she seeks to creatively intertwine the two wherever the Lord calls her.

Educating the Young: An Incalculable Reward

by Bridget Christensen

The greatest source of joy here in Erbil is the students! I have never experienced so much pride in seeing another person accomplish a goal, as I have when a student succeeds. There is a great opportunity here to aid the students in their academic and spiritual journeys and as a teacher one has the great responsibility and privilege of guiding them. Investing in a child is one of the greatest uses of one's hard work, time, attention, emotions, and love. **At Mar Qardakh, one is given the honor of investing in one's students and the reward is incalculable.** What begins with the students overflows into professional development for the **Teachers. Welcome to teaching at Mar Qardakh.** I have no previous, formal teaching experience. This was never a grave hindrance to my ability to teach. With the IB curriculum, a teacher is able to direct the class freely and choose materials that one finds would be the most beneficial to students. This has been an asset to my classroom everyday. One is able to provide one's students with a meaningful education focused on individual needs rather than teaching to the lowest common denominator.

