

ST. THOMAS MISSION

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“..I have such a desire to find the signification of this thing that I would not...turn back for the richest jewel in all of Narnia...if ye will have it so, let us go in and take the adventure that falls to us.”

**C.S. Lewis,
The Lion, the Witch,
and the Wardrobe,
C. 17.**

Everyone is an International Missionary

by Rose Prezgia

‘I’m going to Iraq.’

The usual response to this declaration was a look of confusion and an expression of disbelief. A reiteration of my intention and an explanation for it either increased the shock or transformed it into encouragement – the latter inevitably came from other Catholics. In every promise of prayer, I was reminded of the beauty and truth of the word ‘Catholic.’ Catholic comes from the Greek ‘katholikos’, an adjective signifying ‘universal.’ It is because I am Catholic that I have the obligation, the privilege, and above all the joy of supporting every one of my brothers and sisters in Christ, even those on the other side of the world. For me, I am called to live out this universal nature of Catholicism physically in Iraq. So yes, I am an international missionary. But, in spirit, aren’t we all?



PHOTO BY EMILE WAAD

First Thoughts

by Lizzie Amland

After graduating in May from Franciscan University, Iraq is the last place I would ever expect myself to live and work. Nevertheless, I have fallen in love with the country, my work, and the people. My initial thoughts upon arriving in Iraq were colored by uncertainty and trepidation. The very idea of living and working in a land often depicted as war-torn and tumultuous was daunting. Yet, as I embarked on this extraordinary journey and immersed myself in the heart of Iraq, I have been profoundly moved and deeply transformed. Over the course of these two weeks, I have come to realize that Iraq is not solely defined by its history or the conflicts that have scarred its landscape. It is a land of immense resilience, rich cultural heritage, and the most hospitable people one could hope to encounter. Teaching at Mar Qardakh International School here has been a profound experience. It has reinforced my belief in the power of education as a force for positive change. Moreover, the warmth and kindness I have received from the Iraqi people has been deeply moving. The bonds I have made, the stories I have heard, and the shared moments of laughter and camaraderie have etched indelible memories within me. In just two weeks, Iraq has revealed its hidden beauty, dispelling my initial apprehensions. It has become not only a place of work but a second home where I have found purpose, connection, and an enduring love for its people and culture.

The Uncertain Road

by Margaret Wittmann

I was rereading the Narnia series when I began discerning the call to serve in Iraq. Although I was fearful, I had a strong desire to go, which I could not explain. What I have quoted above (p. 1) refers to the moment that the Pevensie siblings stumble across the trees which will lead them back to the professor's house. Despite an inability to remember that the path leads home, they each experience a strange desire to follow it nonetheless. This scene from the Chronicles of Narnia seemed extraordinarily fitting for the situation I found myself in. Like the Pevensies, I decided to take the adventure that fell to me, if Ye would have it so.

