



BORDERLAND Ministries

MISSION STATEMENT:

Rio Grande Borderland Ministries is an agency of the Diocese of the Rio Grande committed to offering a compassionate response to needs of the New Mexico and far western Texas borderlands. For RGBM everyone eats, everyone is clothed, everyone has a safe and healthy habitat and everyone is loved.

PRIORITIES:

- Extend, expand and deepen services for those in need on the border.
- Support and expand existing borderland ministries of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande and work with congregations that have border ministries.
- Understand and identify new borderland needs throughout the Diocese and engage them in Christ-like ways. Work with congregations that wish to develop a border ministry or participate in an existing ministry.
- Respond to emergency borderland needs.
- Encourage trans-border relationships and partnerships that facilitate expanded ministries on and across the border.

Existing Diocesan Ministry Support and Expansion:

The Roadrunner Mobile Food Pantry in Columbus: The Mobile Food Pantry program was expanded to provide monthly food for 185 households. RGBM has distributed over 397,000 pounds of food.

The Palomas Feeding Program: Ten of the poorest and neediest families in Palomas were provided with a monthly food basket, as well as clothing, blankets and other necessities.



The Palomas Shoe Box Program: Christmas shoe boxes full of gifts were given to over 600 needy children in Columbus, New Mexico, including over 400 children from Palomas, Mexico.



The Borderland Blanket and Coat Drive: More than 500 coats and blankets were distributed to people in Palomas and others in need in Luna County.

The Women's Cooperative in Palomas: Over \$6,000 of the women's products was sold.

Pastoral Care and Worship:

- 1. Columbus:** Individual pastoral care and grief counseling was provided as needed. Weekly Eucharistic services were held, with the addition of a bilingual service.
 - 2. Terlingua and Lajitas:** Spanish language is included in services at these two locations as per the needs of the congregation.
 - 3. St. James:** St. James celebrated a Spanish healing service on August
 - 4. Good Shepherd, Silver City:** Spanish language worship was offered on the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Posadas were celebrated for the community.
- Otra Vez Thrift Store, Terlingua:** After the expansion of their facilities last year this ministry continues to thrive and move forward. Work is underway to install a storage container in which to store merchandise that is not yet sorted. The facility is now able to handle furniture items, which will be a great help.

Distribution Center Expansion: Holy Spirit, El Paso, continued their ministry as the long-planned RGBM El Paso based storage and distribution facility. The 12x10 storeroom at Holy Spirit has at times, been lined with boxes stacked 5 feet high containing dozens of pairs of jeans, t-shirts, underwear, socks, shoes, pj's, sweater, jackets and more, and ranging in size from birth to young adult, including men and women's items. Donated items have been distributed in Palomas, Columbus, Anapra, Juárez and El Paso. Well over 50 backpacks and bags have been donated and distributed to school children, along with multiple items of school supplies. Donations have also included dozens of coats and blankets, bedding and personal items, and Christmas gifts for children.



San Jose de Anapra and Santa Maria Magdalena: The Diocese of Northern Mexico has instituted some changes along the border region common with us. Unfortunately, Santa María Magdalena mission closed last year. Fr. Miguel Angel Ramirez at San José de Anapra has been replaced. Fr. Miguel Angel is now working with Fr. J.J. Bernal at St. Christopher's in El Paso in a number of areas including preaching, presiding at the Eucharist and overseeing their pecan grove. We are considering our next steps.

Emergency Food: Needy families and the homeless in the greater Columbus, New Mexico area as well as families in Palomas and Anapra, Mexico were provided with emergency food as needed. A refrigerator and freezer were added to the Columbus Facility so that fresh and frozen food could also be provided.

Emergency Home Repair: Emergency home repair was provided to several families in Columbus New Mexico and Palomas, Mexico.

Project Borderland Reach: A 2008 4-wheel drive Jeep was purchased to facilitate access and deliver goods throughout the borderlands. Over 15,500 miles were logged.

Micro-Loan Program: A grant was awarded for 0% interest micro-loans to assist families in making necessary home repairs in 2015. Loans are being repaid faithfully, providing funds for future loans.

Terlingua and Lajitas: Services during the cool months were reestablished at Terlingua and Lajitas, reviving dormant ministries that were first established by Fr. Mel La Follette(?) in the 1980's. A Spanish-language Eucharist was celebrated at Santa Inez, Terlingua in April. St. James Alpine is exploring the possibility of providing occasional services at an unused chapel in Boquillas del Carmen, across the Rio Grande from Big Bend National Park.

Ojinaga Orphanage: contact was made with Albergue Casa Hogar, an extended-care children's shelter in Ojinaga via St. James of Alpine, followed by on-site visits by St. James and RGBM representatives. The establishment presently houses 39 boys and girls between the ages of 1 and 15. New restaurant grade pots, pans, and large food preparation utensils were supplied for this ministry, and we are exploring other ways of supporting this ministry.

Parish Ministry Clearinghouse:

Casa de Amor Para Niños: POB Grant monies were employed in supporting a girls' orphanage in Palomas called Casa de Amor Para Niños. It houses 11 girls aged 12-17. Good Shepherd Church, Silver City is a constituent member of the interdenominational board that oversees this ministry.

Alas de Amor: POB Grant monies were also employed to feed the hungry and give scholarships to high school students in Palomas under the auspices of the same board that oversees Casa de Amor.

Sanctuary: As of this year eight counties and three cities in New Mexico (Including Santa Fe) declare themselves sanctuaries for refugees from other countries in the process of seeking asylum. In Texas 13 cities and one county declare themselves sanctuary, though none of them exist within the boundaries of the Diocese of the Rio Grande. Some of our parishes are studying the topic.

Building Programs: Trinity on the Hill, Los Alamos, and St. Bede's, Santa Fe, both participated in home-building activities in Ciudad Juarez.

The New Mexico/ Texas/ Mexico borderland served by RGBM is an international borderland in excess of 800 miles. **There is no other existing borderland organization that serves this entire area.** And there is no other Diocese that serves an international border of this size. The U.S.-Mexico border along its entire length is riddled with violence, poverty, hunger and the disenfranchisement of the poor, and has become a political hot-button. The Diocese of the Rio Grande seeks to speak a Gospel word of peace and reconciliation into a strife-ridden area of our world. The compassionate response of RGBM to those in need is simple: everyone eats, everyone is clothed, everyone has a safe and healthy habitat and everyone is loved.

Voices from Both Sides Celebrating the Eucharist in the Rio Grande

By the Rev. Paul Moore
Rector, Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Silver City

On May 6th Fr. Paul Moore, Pastor Sarah Guck, her husband Tony, and Pastors Angel and Mayela Garibay from a Pentecostal Church in Palomas, Chihuahua, gathered with hundreds of other people at Lajitas, Texas for Voices from Both Sides/Voces de Ambos Ladoss.



Voices from Both Sides is a day when the Border Patrol allows people to cross the river to and from Mexico freely to visit family and friends, to buy and sell, and to celebrate the fact that in spite of the political divisions marked by the Rio Grande, the human family is one, and has been one along both sides of this river for centuries.

The event commemorates the closing of this small international port by the U.S. Border Patrol on Mexican Mother's Day, May 10, 2010, hence the alternate Spanish name of La Protesta, and has taken place on the Saturday closest to that date since that year. It is marked by family reunions, a lot of good food and drink, music from both sides, and good fun. At 3:00 in the afternoon everyone is encouraged to get into the water.

The Rev's, Moore, Guck and Garibay, with the indispensable help of Episcopalian Martha Stafford of Terlingua, set up a table in the middle of the river at 10:30 a.m. and celebrated the Eucharist in English and Spanish, offering communion to anyone who wished on both sides. The short homilies by both the Rev. Moore and Rev. Garibay garnered spontaneous applause as they both talked about how the human family and especially the family of God is not divided by political borders. About 30 people, 15 on each side, received the Sacrament.



Many people, including the coordinator of the event, thanked the team for the significance and power of what took place, and plans are developing for a repeat celebration next year.



Bishop Michael L. Vono

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CHURCHES INVOLVED

- Good Shepherd, Silver City
- St. Luke's, Deming
- St. Andrew's, Las Cruces
- Holy Spirit, El Paso
- St. Christopher's, El Paso
- St. James', Alpine,
- St. Paul's, Marfa
- St. Bede's, Santa Fe

Interested parishes:

- St. Mark's, Albuquerque
- St. Luke's, La Union

MINISTRIES OF THE RGBM

- Columbus/Palomas Women's Ministries/Outreach
- St. Luke's, Deming Mobile Food Pantry
- St. Christopher's, El Paso Food Pantry/Feeding Program
- Holy Spirit, El Paso Food Pantry
- St. James', Alpine Big Bend Mission
- Otra Vez Outreach
- Terlingua Santa Inez
- Lajitas Mary & St. Joseph
- St. Paul's, Marfa Evolving Outreach

NEW MEXICO

TEXAS

MEXICO

SANTA FE St. Bede's

Albuquerque St. Mark's

SILVER CITY Good Shepherd

DEMING St. Luke's

COLUMBUS/PALOMAS Rio Grande Borderland Ministries

LAS CRUCES St. Andrew's

LA UNION St. Luke's

EL PASO St. Christopher's Holy Spirit

MARFA St. Paul's

ALPINE St. James'

Terlingua/Lajitas Big Bend Mission Santa Inez St. Mary & St. Joseph Otra Vez

Let us pray:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.