

## Day 5 | Honduras Mission Trip | Thursday 16

Today reminded us that mission is so much more than building projects or delivering supplies. It is about **encounter**.

Our morning began with Mass in one of the 37 communities served by the Monteverde Clinic. Seeing families gather in faith, knowing that this clinic has become a lifeline for so many surrounding villages, gave us a deeper appreciation for what our Nativity community has made possible through Operation Starfish.

After Mass, we had the privilege of personally delivering food care packages to families. Looking into their eyes, hearing their stories, praying with them, and sharing a simple moment together transformed what could have been just another distribution into a relationship. It reminded us that every donation represents a person, a family, and a tangible expression of Christ's love. Father Didier, the French Franciscan Friar living in the mountain, shared a heartfelt message of thanks to Msgr. Bob and the entire Nativity Parish, recognizing that our partnership extends far beyond financial support; it is a relationship built on faith, trust, and love.

We also learned about the resilience of this community. We visited a traditional “*telar*”, where the beautiful Lenca weaving tradition continues to be preserved, and later toured the local coffee warehouse. We heard the community's hope of one day reopening it, creating opportunities that would again provide stability for the coffee-growing families. Their hope, perseverance, and determination continue to inspire us.

We said goodbye to the incredible women who lovingly prepared every meal during our stay. Before departing, Father Didier and Father Bennett exchanged blessings and words of gratitude. Then came the journey to Tegucigalpa.

What should have been a simple drive became eight hours of adventure; four hours standing in pickup trucks navigating rugged mountain roads before reaching Zacapa, where our buses awaited for another four-hour ride to Tegucigalpa. This time it wasn't the rain that tested us, but thick clouds of dust, rough terrain, and a few moments that reminded us to place our complete trust in God. (continued in the comments...)

Every bump, every steep climb, and every mile became another opportunity to surrender control and let Him carry us safely forward.

By the end of the day, we were exhausted, dusty, sore, and grateful.

Experiencing these communities firsthand changes everything. It reminds us that the projects supported through Operation Starfish are not simply buildings or programs, they are places where faith is nurtured, families are served, hope is restored, and lives are transformed.

To everyone at Nativity who has prayed, volunteered, donated, or supported this mission: **thank you**. We wish each of you could experience these encounters in person, because they reveal

the true impact of your generosity. We are simply the hands and feet privileged to witness what your compassion is accomplishing.

*"Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."* — **1 John 3:18**