

Our mission in Los Toros is a mission of solidarity. What does solidarity mean? These *Principles of solidarity-based partnerships*, taken from Catholic Relief Services' Parish Partnership Manual express it well.

Principles of solidarity-based partnerships

I. Emphasize relationship over resources.

True partnerships build and nurture a familial relationship over a period of time. When the relationship is valued above all, it allows for mutual participation and transformation, and all are invited to participate equally, as we all have the ability to love and pray and be present to one another. In partnerships based on resources, the partner with little material resources is excluded from fully participating, and relegated to only receiving.

II. Practice mutuality and equality.

True mutuality allows each partner to function from a place of strength rather than weakness. Each acknowledges the wholeness of the other. We must be alert to the historic imbalances of power between the North and the South, and the way that plays out in a relationship. We need to intentionally incorporate opportunities for dialogue, planning, assessing, challenging, and reflecting together, in order to not fall into the trap of the giver and the receiver, of the superior and the inferior.

III. Seek to give and receive, learn and teach.

True relationship is a constant give and take. We all bring something to the table and we all have poverties that need to be addressed. This requires a spirit of humility, recognizing that we are mutually interdependent and need each other.

IV. Work to change unjust systems and structures.

When we focus on the relationship, ask open-ended questions, and learn from our partners, they invite us in to see and understand their reality – their joys and celebrations, as well as their sorrows and struggles. We begin to recognize the structures and systems that often keep people in poverty and are unacceptably unjust, and are challenged to gently confront our own role and contribution to this injustice, whether through our inaction, or through our consumer choices, our levels of consumption, etc. We are then called to work to change those systems and/or our own personal habits and activities, for the sake of those we have come to know and love (and others who share the same challenges).

V. Deepen our faith by experiencing the universal catholic church.

Partnership calls us more fully into the Church as one Body of Christ, with many unique parts offering different gifts, while united Christ. We are challenged by our partner's witness of faith amidst adversity. Coming to know brothers and sisters from another culture, we learn new ways of understanding the Scriptures and see new ways of being a parish community. We experience our oneness in Christ, we enlarge our tent, and expand our sense of shared humanity, not only with our parish partner, but with all God's people in the universal church.

All are welcome to attend our Mission Council meetings. Dates and times are announced in the parish bulletin under THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISH.