

Catholic Mission Trips, Inc.

India Missions



Information and Orientation for missions in Thrissur,
India.

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Introduction

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” - Mahatma Gahndi

“Faith in action is Love, and Love in action is Service” - Mother Teresa

Hello and welcome to the training packet for Catholic Mission Trips, INC's annual mission to Pope Paul Peace Home in Kerala, India. Congratulations on getting to this point! God has called you in the beautiful and maybe intimidating direction of service through international missions, and hopefully, specifically to minister to people in India. Thank you for your courage and initiative in answering that call. He has great plans for you ahead! Most likely, you already have some expectations about what this trip will be like and what you want to get out of it. Throughout this packet, please challenge yourself to be open to God's plans for you on this trip, not just what you are expecting! This packet will help provide you with all the information you need about travel plans and details about our specific mission, inform you about the culture of Kerala, and facilitate self-reflection and deepening of spirituality. If you have any unanswered questions at the end of this document, please feel free to ask!

Emilly and Andre Downing, (509) - 212 - 7671, (206) 395 8232

Your Team Leaders

Andre and Emilyly Downing

Andre and Emilyly recently got married and started their dreams of leading missions together. Andre is a medical student, and Emilyly is a child behavioral therapist. Emilyly has worked with CMT as a missionary for 4 years prior to leading the India program. Both are passionate about service, and loving through open-mindedness and an attitude of humble servanthood.



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About Our Mission

Pope John Paul Peace Home and Mercy Home in Thrissur, India.



Introduction to India Program

Who we are, what this trip is about, and what you should expect to get out of this trip.

What you need to know first:

This is first and foremost, a service trip. The aim of this trip is to love and serve the people in the homes in which we will be staying. We will live the life that the nuns and the patients live, which is a life of joyful service, and mindful meditation on our faith. Although there are many wonderful sites to see in India, and we will endeavor to see as many as possible, serving the patients and sisters at the Peace Home and Mercy Home will be our main objective. Speaking from personal experience, if you really invest in loving and serving these people wholeheartedly, it's impossible for your heart not to be changed in an exceptionally beautiful way. Our trip will be an authentically Catholic experience. We will be immersing ourselves fully in our calling and our faith, not only through heartfelt service, but also by praying the Rosary, attending daily mass with the Sisters, and taking time for personal reflection every day.



Pope John Paul II Peace Home

Our primary workplace will be at Pope John Paul II Peace home. This also is where we will be staying and eating all our meals. The Nirmala Sisters (Sisters of Mary Margaret) take great care of us there. The Peace Home is a full-time care facility for adults and children with profound physical handicaps. Because of their handicaps, these patients need help with eating, dressing, bathing and in some cases, moving. There are about 80 patients who live at the home permanently, and 10-15 sisters who care for them full time. Our mission will be to help the sisters care for the patients there (which includes doing laundry, dishes, preparing food as well as feeding, moving, helping to clothe, and in some cases, bathing the patients) as well as visiting with the patients. The visiting is a crucial part of our role at the Peace Home as many of these patients rarely get to see or visit with others. They love to laugh, sing songs, dance, make rosaries, pray, and watch movies. The people in the Peace Home are truly a blessing to know. You may find the more you serve them, the more THEY are serving you and your heart. Any additional skills you have to offer (such as medical training or a passion for teaching music) will be more than welcome as well.



The Mercy Home

In addition to helping at the Peace Home, we will also be serving at the Mercy Home, which is adjacent to the Peace Home. The Mercy home is primarily a school and rehabilitation center for children and adults with varying degrees of mental handicaps. This facility is a school of 300+ students, many of whom ride a bus to the school each day and live at home. Some students live there full time. Though the school is mostly self-sufficient with its own classrooms and teachers, we will spend some time there visiting with the students, taking part in some of their activities (like PE) and even helping/presenting in some of the classes.



Housing and Meals

We will be staying on site at the Peace Home. They have about 10 beds. They are narrow, low to the ground, hard wooden frames with a thin, firm mattress (more like a cot mat). If you wish, you can bring your own sleeping mat/air mattress. Bug nets are not provided, so if you wish to have one, you will need to bring your own. Many people find they don't get many bites, however, so a mosquito net is optional. Each gender will have their own room (Men/Women), and their own bathroom. The bathrooms have one toilet, a bidet, a sink, and a faucet/bucket for bucket showers. In general, Indians favor bidets over toilet paper so I would suggest bringing a few rolls with you.



We will be eating most of our meals at the Peace Home. The diet consists of curry (chicken or fish) white rice, potatoes or noodles, eggs, and fruit/veggies. If you have any dietary needs, let us know and we will do our best to accommodate. They have a water filtration system at the Peace Home as well, so we will have regular access to clean, drinkable water. At the Peace Home, there is one landline phone in the office, but no access to wifi or cell service. We will be visiting the Trinitarian Seminary (which has wifi) at our earliest possible convenience in order to touch base with those at home, but other than that, communication outside of India is very limited.

Daily Schedule Example

This is subject to many changes, of course, but this is about what you should expect for a daily work day at the Peace Home.

On Saturday and Sunday, we will have outings to go sight see in the area.

5:30 - 6:30am: Daily Mass

6:30 - 7:30am: Prepare for day (great time for extra sleeping or showers)

7:30 - 8:00am: Our Breakfast

8:00 - 10:00am: Patients' breakfast, dressing, and showers.

10:30am: Morning Tea

11:00am: Lunch for Patients

12:00pm: Our Lunch

1:00 - 4:00: Visit with Patients, visit Mercy Home, Free time, personal reflection time, ect.

4:00: Afternoon Tea time

5:00 - 6:00: Dinner for Patients

6:00 – 7:30: Rosary and adoration

8:00: Our Dinner

9:00 – 10:00: Group discussion/reflection time

10:00/11:00: Blissful sleep

Travel Plans

Andre and Emily have already booked their travel to Kerala. You are responsible for booking and purchasing your own flight to the Kochi International Airport in Kerala. If you do choose to join us for the trip this year, we will send you our specific flight info. You're welcome to try to book the same flights as us. If it is possible, we would love to travel with you! Generally, we have found Etihad Airways to be very comfortable and reliable, although the best airline choice for you will be different depending on where you live, and the nearest international airport to you. You are responsible for booking your own flights as well as insuring you have a reliable way to let us know if your flights are delayed or canceled. We will all be taking a car together from the Kochi airport to our final destination in Thrissur (about an hour and half from the airport) so if you don't book the same flights as us, you need to insure your flight will arrive within a few hours (before or after is fine) of our flight. Keep in mind most of the flight from USA to India have long layovers, so you may need to plan a few extra days of travel on both ends of this trip if needed.

About India

During our trip, we will be in the state in Kerala, southern India. The following content provides more information about the area and the culture.

About Kerala (Known as God's own Country)

Kerala, a state in Southern India is known as a tropical paradise of waving palms and wide sandy beaches. It is a narrow strip of coastal territory that slopes down the Western Ghats in a cascade of lush green vegetation, and reaches to the Arabian sea. Kerala borders the states of Tamil Nadu to the east and Karnataka to the north. It is also known for its backwaters, mountains, coconuts, spices and art forms like Kathakali and Mohini Attam. It is the most literate state in India, and a land of diverse religions, where you can find Hindu temples, mosques, churches, and even synagogues. The community in Kerala, and specifically in Thrissur, the town we will be staying in, is very close knit. Hindus and Catholics live and work together in harmony to create a beautiful and diverse community of love and service.





Catholicism in India

Here's some background on Catholicism in India, drawn from The Future Church. Though Catholics represent only 1.6 percent of the population, India is so big that this works out to a sizeable Catholic community of 17.6 million. The Church is divided into three rites: Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, and the Latin rite. The Syro-Malabar rite has an estimated four million adherents, the Syro-Malankara about 500,000, and the rest belong to the Latin Rite. Local tradition credits the apostle Thomas with the introduction of Christianity, and believers who trace their ancestry to him are known as "Thomas Christians." Missionary efforts in the South, centered on Kerala and Goa, followed the Portuguese conquest of Goa in 1510. In many ways, Indian Catholicism is thriving. The Church is growing at a rate ahead of overall population growth, and by 2050 there could be almost 30 million Catholics. (That would put India well ahead of the Catholic population of Germany, for example, and bring it close to Poland.)



Outside its traditional base in the south, Catholicism is also expanding in the northeast.

In the state of Arunachal Pradesh on the eastern border with China, where Catholicism arrived barely 25 years ago, there are today 180,000 Catholics out of a total population of 800,000. Catholicism enjoys wide respect for its network of schools, hospitals and social service centers. When Mother Teresa died in 1997, the Indian government afforded her a state funeral, only the second private citizen after Mahatmas Gandhi to receive the honor. Her casket was borne by the same military carriage which carried Gandhi's remains in 1948.

This is a very interesting and informative video about Catholicism in India if you are interested in knowing more:



Our Partners in India



Society of Nirmala Sisters

We will be working with the Nirmala Dasi sisters at the JPPI Peace Home. This order of sisters was founded in Thrissur, the town in which we will be staying, and they are dedicated to service of the poor, sick, and destitute. These women are incredible! Here is a link to their website:

<http://www.sndsisters.org/home/inner/7>

Trinitarians

The Trinitarians are our primary contacts in India, who arrange most of our travel. They are amazing men of God, with great senses of humor! They run a minor seminary (boys ages 12-18) in Thrissur. Click the link to learn more about them: www.trinitariansindia.org

Preparation

If you have discerned that this trip to India is in fact the one for you, this is the information you need now.

Living in community

I'm sure you have had roommates at some point in your life. Living in community is similar to that, but even better! It's all about respect, understanding, and growing in your relationship with each other and God. You are about to be thrown into an adventure of a lifetime with a group of people that you have never met. It's okay if that makes you nervous. It will surprise you how quickly you bond with the people around you when you are all going through this new adventure together. The following personality inventories will help you to think about your personality and all the things you are bringing to the table on this trip, as well as how you interact with other personalities which will help living in community with perfect strangers a little bit easier for all of us.

Personality tests

If you have already taken personality inventories of this nature recently, please revisit your results. If it was a year or more ago, consider taking the test again! At the very least, it's interesting for you to see if you get the same result as last time.

Temperament test: <http://personality-testing.info/tests/O4TS/>

Here is a link to all the four temperaments, and what they mean. Read all of them to better understand your teammates (Andre is primarily phlegmatic, while Emilly is a Sanguine/phlegmatic): <http://www.thetransformedsoul.com/additional-studi...>

Meyers-Briggs test: <https://www.16personalities.com/free-personality-t...>

Andre is a INFJ, and Emilly is an ENFP.

Faith Formation Questions

This is a mission trip. Christ is at the forefront of everything that will happen. God is in control of everything that happens. We are not. Although for most of us, our aim on this trip is not to do anything for ourselves, it is to help others, God is exceptionally faithful to deepen your relationship with Him when you open your heart. This trip is extremely emotional and spiritual in

nature and you will likely be challenged greatly and grow deeply in this regard. This is the part of the training packet where we want you to spend a little time. Really enter into prayer and be close to God. We want to get to know where you are in your faith journey. This isn't a test, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. People come on this trip in a variety of different spiritual highs and lows, and all seeking different things. An honest reflection of your current spiritual state will help us all to go in to this trip with the right mindset. Please take some time and fill out the following Faith Examination Document, which can be found at the end of this PDF.

Medical / Visa Information

Medical

You will need to see your doctor before leaving the country. You need to make sure you are up to date on your immunizations and shots. Chances are you will have to go to a special travel clinic to get some of the shots you may need, because most doctors don't carry certain ones. The two attached links give you more information. The most common immunizations needed are the Hepatitis A shot, Tetanus (if needed) and Typhoid. Other vaccines may be recommended as well. The CDC website for the area we will be in (Kerala, Southern India) will have all the suggested and required vaccinations listed. You may also already have some of them (like Tetanus and Rabies) so check your immunization records before seeing the travel doctor/nurse. You also have the option to get a Malaria medication vaccination from your doctor. This a precaution that is strongly recommended to anyone traveling in India, but the area we are traveling does not have a large malaria-infected mosquito population. Consult your doctor and decide what is best for you. There are two popular types of oral malaria prevention medicine, one that you take every day and one that you take once a week.

Health information for traveling to India :

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india>

Vaccines Needed for India:

<http://www.webmd.com/vaccines/vaccines-for-travel-...>

Visa

Since we are only staying in India for 10 days, we are eligible to apply for an e-tourist visa. Basically, this is an electronic visa we can apply and get approved for online. More info can be found about it here: <https://www.indianembassy.org/pages.php?id=120> The visa generally gets approved quickly and is very easy to apply for. The window for the visa to be valid is 30 days before the trip. Since the approval process is generally a few days, you should apply for this visa no later than 5 days before the trip. So your visa application needs to be made between June 10th and July 4th. Make sure to save and print EVERY email the Indian embassy sends you in response to your visa application. You will need these emails (especially the one stating that your visa application has been accepted and approved) printed out when you check in for your flight to India.

Link to e-TV application site: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

Here is some information you will need to complete your visa application.

Our port of arrival will be COK (Kochi/Kochin/Cochi/Cochin)

Our expected arrival date is Sunday, July 10th

US citizens do not have a Citizenship/National ID number, unless you are willing to put your social security number (which I am not), so either use your SSN, or put N/A

For the question: Have you lived for at least two years in the country where you are applying visa? They are asking if you have lived at least two years in the USA, not India. The question is awkwardly worded, so I did some confirming research.

When it asks you for your contact person in India, put Fr. Sunil Thoppiltharayil. His phone number is 949 708 6371. The address of his residence is Holy Trinity Ashram, Arattukara Post, Laloore Thrissur, 680618

The address of the place we will be staying is Pope John Paul II Peace Home, Peringandoor P.O. Thrissur, Kerala - 680581

If there is any further information you happen to need, please don't hesitate to ask!

Packing List

Passport (and a copy)

Any and All Flight / Medical information (printed off)

Some spending money (You can get it converted to rupees beforehand if you wish)

Mosquito spray/lotion

Sunscreen

Rosary

Bible

Christian prayer book (if you have one)

Type D Outlet Plug (they have a different outlet system than us)

Hand Sanitizer / Wet wipes

Toiletry Items

Any medicine you may need

Sleeping Pad or air mattress

As far as clothing goes, modesty is important. Nothing should be shorter than your knee and you should not show your shoulders. Medium to long skirts, cargo pants, harem pants (loose fitting, leggings/yoga type workout pants are generally only worn underneath longer tops) are all great options. Long shorts are also appropriate (bermuda/knee length)

If you have any questions or need any clarification, please let us know!

emillyk555@gmail.com, (206) 395 8232,

Thanks, and we hope to serve with you soon! You are in our prayers

Andre and Emilly

Faith Examination Document

Pray, reflect and prepare

1. Describe your prayer life.
2. Give us your personal Testimony (How you personally came to know Jesus)
3. What do you struggle with the most in your faith life?
4. What are some things about yourself that you think you need to work on?
5. What are some things that you love about yourself?
6. Why are you going on this specific trip?
7. What are your expectations for this trip? What are you nervous about , what are you excited about?
8. How can we be praying for you in preparation for this trip?

Please reflect and complete this page at your own pace, and email it to emillyk555@gmail.com when you are ready.