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Looking Back...

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Looking Back...

Cover Page Footnote
This article is from an earlier iteration of Diálogo which had the subtitle "A Bilingual Journal." The publication is now titled "Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Studies Journal."

This reflection is available in Diálogo: https://via.library.depaul.edu/dialogo/vol8/iss1/29
If you would have asked me why I chose a life of service two years ago my answer would be very different than what it is today. My calling, I always believed, was different than the actual career I thought I would have. In the past, work and service was a black and white issue. I would work for a living and then I would serve when I had free time. One experience changed that mentality; 10 days in El Salvador.

To say that I experienced God every day I was there does not do my experience justice. I saw God in the people I worked with every single day. That opened my eyes to my calling like nothing had before. To experience a richness of faith in the people of El Salvador, despite a world of such suffering and poverty, is something that I will continue to grapple with for the rest of my life. The people of El Salvador taught me many things, but the most important was that service to the poor truly is my calling in life.

Being able to integrate a life of service in my career is something that continues to challenge me, but it is something I thank God for every day of my life. My experience in El Salvador guided me through graduation and into my current career working within University Ministry at DePaul as coordinator of the Amate House program. Here I am able to apply my business background as I manage and direct a program based on the tenets of faith, justice, service, community and simple living.

From a business perspective, I realize that my return on investment will never be equal to the energy I put into my work. It will be far greater. If I come to the end of my life of service and am half as rich in faith as the people of El Salvador, I will have “prophet (ed)” greatly!

Timothy Ballard, graduated with an Honors Marketing undergraduate degree and now is coordinator of DePaul University’s Amate House. He helps students of Amate House in a year-long formation committed to the tenets of service, social justice, community living, faith and simplicity. In collaboration with DePaul University’s Ministry and Archdiocese of Chicago, he exposes students to the above mentioned tenets and how it applies to their individual lives and community at large. His ultimate hope is to help connect students with their deeper calling to service, faith, simple living and justice as they go beyond the Amate House. For more information contact him at tballard@depaul.edu. You may also visit DePaul University’s Ministry, located at 2250 North Kenmore Avenue, Student Center Room 311.


1. Amate in Latin means “love in action” and each year ten undergraduate students come together to carry out “love in action”. Amate house, the faith-based community, is located on the corner of Belden and Kenmore. Student members of Amate commit to a simpler life dedicated to service and justice work in a supportive community of faith and spirituality. As a member, students volunteer six hours per week in areas of need in the city of Chicago. They also participate in weekly community nights, offer community dinners throughout the week and participate in four retreats.

 Timothy Ballard teaching at the horgarito del nino de prague, Copapayo, El Salvador. 2002.