Saint Thomas More Catholic Chapel and Center at Yale
Alternative Spring Break 2018
Nicaragua, France and Washington D.C.

Background

Thank you for your interest in the 2018 Saint Thomas More Alternative Spring Break (ASB) trips. The ASB program has been a cornerstone of the social justice and prayer mission at Saint Thomas More for many years. In contrast to other spring break trips, the ASB program was conceived as an opportunity for Catholic students at Yale to take part in a formative, faith-centered, and life-changing experience. By immersing themselves in an international setting, locally or abroad, participants in ASB have a chance to bear witness to the truly universal nature of the Catholic Church, while living in and serving a local community.

Location

• TAIZÉ, FRANCE: Founded in 1940 by Brother Rodger as a hideaway for Jews during WWII, the Taizé community in France is now an ecumenical monastic order composed of over one-hundred Catholic and Protestant Brothers from around the world. Known as one of the most important sites of Christian pilgrimage, Taizé welcomes over 100,000 young adults to the community each year. Young Christians from around the world come to experience Bible study, justice talks, community work, and three times of daily prayer. Taizé prayer has become famous throughout the world for its contemplative nature. Grounded in chants, silence, and biblical readings, the prayer services provide an intimate experience of God’s presence. At the Taizé community, prayer provides a rhythm for daily life and grounds the participant in God’s love and call for justice. A week at Taizé means time for reflection, prayer, and a deeper commitment to justice. Come to experience God and be transformed by the encounter.

• NICARAGUA: Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and one of the economically poorest. Although currently very safe, past issues of corruption, political unrest and natural disasters have created a very uneven distribution of wealth with less access to health care, education and employment opportunities for the very poor, who live on $1.00 a day. Participants will be hosted by local Nicaraguan organizations, which focus on accompaniment and empowerment, helping communities and individuals use their own talents for development. In Troilo, a community outside of Leon, participants will be working in conjunction with a delegation from the Yale School of Nursing to teach classes in health care, teach in the elementary school, paint or do minor construction, or work on community gardens. Together we will be working with children, teachers, families and health care workers. There will also be time to experience the local culture and sights. Reflection on the education, health care and environmental situation in Nicaragua, as well as Catholic Social Teaching, will be an integral component of this trip.
WASHINGTON D.C.: Journey into the Catholic collaborative work of justice, peace and integrity of creation with the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.) at the nation’s capital. Visit people of various faith networks, organizations and partnerships who provide leadership in advocacy within the public sector. Through the experience, grow in understanding the value of faith based organizations in the formation of public policy and its impact on the domestic and international front. Visits will include: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Jubilee U.S.A., the U.S. Congress, and the World Bank. Explore how the work of faith based advocacy on pressing issues such as human dignity, social justice and integrity of creation is organized and realized. Embrace the Missionary Oblate spirituality in preparation for our journey and be hosted by the Oblate community, which has had a presence in D.C. for more than 100 years. We will also make a day visit to New York City outside the week of the D.C. trip. There we will visit Oblate ministry and faith based collaboration at United Nations and the Pontifical Mission Society. Prayer, service, mission reflection, faith sharing and dialogue will be integral in our preparation and experience. Going to the National Mall and Memorial Parks will be an opportunity to contemplate the sacred lessons of history and engage a vision hope. Experience how Catholic Social Teaching provides a framework and guidance in response to the call “to love your neighbor” and be “salt and light” of the world!

**Logistics**

**Dates**

FRANCE: We will depart New Haven on the evening of Friday, March 9, 2018 and will return on Sunday, March 18, 2018 pending travel arrangements.

NICARAGUA: We will depart New Haven on the evening of Friday, March 16, 2018 and will return on Sunday, March 25, 2018 pending travel arrangements.

WASHINGTON D.C.: We will depart New Haven on Saturday, March 10, 2018 and will return on Saturday, March 17, 2018 pending travel arrangements.

**Cost**

As the heart of Alternative Spring Break is social justice and not tourism. The group will be expected to fundraise a meaningful portion of the cost of travel. The cost of meals and lodging will be covered by Saint Thomas More. Each participant is required to cover the cost of their airfare that is not obtained through fundraising, as it is not refundable. Lack of funds should not be a reason for a student to not participate.

**Trip Coordinators**

FRANCE: Students will be accompanied by Carlene Demiany.

NICARAGUA: Students will be accompanied by Sr. Jenn Schaaf.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: Students will be accompanied by Fr. Karl Davis.
**Eligibility**

Alternative Spring Break is open to current Yale undergraduate and graduate/professional students. Both for logistical reasons and to foster a meaningful small-group dynamic, the size of the groups is strictly capped and will be selected on the basis of competitive application. We expect applicants to have demonstrated a commitment to social justice and the Saint Thomas More community. Accepted participants are expected to make this trip a priority in their academic year, as the groups will be meeting regularly beginning on November 5th to plan for the trip, fundraise, and prepare together.

**Application Timeline**

*Sunday, October 8th*  
Applications open

*Tuesday, October 31st*  
Applications due by 11:59 PM (EST) by email to carlene.demiany@yale.edu jennifer.schaaf@yale.edu or karl.davis@yale.edu

*Thursday, November 2nd*  
Applicants notified of decision

*Sunday, November 5th*  
First meeting of 2017-2018 Alternative Spring Break group

**ASB Application**

I would like to be considered for (check one, two or three choices or indicate preferences with 1, 2 or 3):

☐ France  ☐ Nicaragua  ☐ Washington D.C.

**Identifying Information**

Full Legal Name (as it appears on passport or photo id):

First: ___________________________ Middle: ___________________________ Last: ___________________________

Yale Email: ___________________________ Cell Phone: ___________________________

Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male

Birthdate (MM/DD/YY) ___________________________

Select one:

☐ Yale College undergraduate

Residential College: ___________________________ Year of Graduation: __________

Major(s): ___________________________
☐ Yale graduate or professional student

School: ____________________________________________

Department/Program: ____________________________ Year: ______________

Citizenship (list all that apply): ____________________________________________

Do you have a passport?

☐ Yes. Country: ______________ Passport Number: ______________ Expires on: ______________

☐ No, but I have applied for a U.S. Passport. Date of passport application: ____________

NOTE: All applicants must provide a photocopy of your passport or proof of your passport application with this application.

Application

Please type a thoughtful and honest response to the following questions.

1. What experiences or motivations contribute to your desire to apply for this trip? If you have previously attended an ASB trip with STM, what specific insights, skills, and experiences can you contribute?

2. Describe a situation when your personal views were challenged by the people or a situation you encountered, how you reacted, and what, if anything, you would do differently.

3. Briefly describe your involvement in the Saint Thomas More community, or, if you are a new student, in your prior Church community. What role does this community play in your life?

4. How do you think your personal characteristics will enhance the Alternative Spring Break trip?

5. Skills and Experience:
   a. Although prior travel experience is neither necessary nor expected of all applicants, if you have meaningful international travel or living experience, please list dates and describe briefly here.
   b. Are you proficient in Spanish or French? If you have taken, are currently taking, or will be enrolled in a Spanish or French language class at Yale, please list dates and levels here.
   c. Do you have any relevant community service, volunteer, retreat, or teaching experience? If so, please describe briefly here.
d. If you have any relevant additional skills, medical training, certifications, or talents, please describe here.

6. Please list two faculty members or administrators of Yale University that we may use as character references:

Name: ___________________________ Department/Title: ___________________________

Yale Email: ____________________________________________________________

Name: ___________________________ Department/Title: ___________________________

Yale Email: ____________________________________________________________

7. Please indicate any health issues that might effect your ability to participate fully in the experience.

☐ I would rather discuss my answer to this question in person or on the phone.

8. Please list any allergies and whether or not you carry an epi-pen.

9. “By our presence in the world, we are called to create a society capable of recognizing the dignity of every person and sharing the gift that each person is to the other. With our witness of a living community open to what the Lord commands, by the breath of his Spirit, we can respond to the needs of each person with the same love with which God has loved us. There are so many people waiting for us to go out and meet them and look at them with the tenderness that we have experienced and received from our relationship with God. That is where our power lies: not in our ideals and in our personal projects, but rather in the strength of his mercy which transforms and gives us life.” Reflect on this quote by Pope Francis. What does this mean to you, either in the context of your own life or in terms of how you view our world?

Application Submission

Save a completed copy of this application with your answers included, and attach the completed document to an email sent to carlene.demiany@yale.edu; jennifer.schaaf@yale.edu or karl.davis@yale.edu no later than 11:59 PM (EST) on Tuesday, October 31st, 2018. Additionally, all applicants must attach a PDF or JPEG photocopy of the identification page of your passport; the photocopy should clearly display your name, photograph, passport number, country of citizenship, and passport expiration date. If you are a U.S. Citizen and have applied for but not received a U.S. Passport, you must submit proof that your passport application has been submitted and received by the U.S. Department of State.

Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________