

F A L L 2 0 1 1



global **solidarity** partnership

International Delight Night
September 17, 2011
6:00PM to 10:00PM
at St. John the Beloved Hall.

Come join us for a fabulous night of international foods, wine, beer and soft drinks, silent auction, reggae and continental music and folk dances to benefit our diocesan partnership with San Marcos, Guatemala. Included in the silent auction are an Oreck vacuum, herbalife starter program, a massage, various restaurant gift certificates, wine baskets, and more! The cost for this great event is \$25. per person. Send your check made out to "CDOW~Delight Night" to CDOW, C/O Mary Jo Frohlich, 205 North Twin Lakes Blvd., Newark, DE 19711. For more information please contact Mary Jo Frohlich at 302-559-7766 or maryjofrohlich@gmail.com.



Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini, bishop of San Marcos, will receive the 2011 Pacem in Terris Peace and Freedom award in Davenport, Iowa, on October 2. See <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/briefs/cns/20110812.htm> for details about the award. Bishop Ramazzini has been a great champion of human rights and a staunch supporter of the Solidarity Partnership between the Dioceses of Wilmington and San Marcos. We congratulate him on this great honor and wish him continued success in his ministry.

Thoughts from members of recent delegation to San Marcos:

"I hope that after I return I will be like these people are in their warmth and affection. They have taught me."

"I see who their Christ is...tortured and crucified; they relate. But which is ours?... Apart from this, I think God gives us intelligence and free will so that we take responsibility for what needs to be done.."

"This gives me much to consider...A good experience...To me it is important to do God's will, even though my will might be something else."

"I am very moved, very glad. I have some tears."

Read more inside!

Coming soon:

Information on future transforming encounters:

Hear the stories and share prayer with some of our sisters and brothers in Guatemala.

See www.cdow.org/solidarity.html for more information on the Solidarity Partnership.

If you have a comment or question about this newsletter, please email Pat.Sormani@gmail.com

Ten representatives of the Wilmington Diocese visited our sister diocese of San Marcos in June: Peter Lyons, Rory McLaughlin, Anthony McGuire and Derek Waring, all seniors or juniors at University of Delaware and members of St. Catherine of Siena parish; Eddie Velasquez, 18, of St. Michael's, Georgetown; Justin Greenberg, 28, a Spanish teacher at Salesianum High School; Xylene Graves, 25, from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton; Leanne Renneisen, from St. Mary of the Assumption; and Mary Jo Frohlich and Fr. John Hynes of the Solidarity Committee. For all but Peter and the committee members, it was their first visit. Read about their reactions and see photos of the trip here.

Reflection by Eddie Velasquez

I am very happy and blessed to have had the opportunity to go on a delegation to San Marcos, Guatemala this past June. I personally gained a lot of knowledge in understanding the lives of our Guatemalan brothers and sisters in Christ. From first hand experience, I saw a lot of differences in the ways in which they live their life. Most of the villagers have to go through a lot of obstacles, which makes their life hard to live. One of the obstacles is not getting paid for the labor they have done in plantations, which are also called "fincas," and many will never get paid because they don't know their rights, so the owner takes advantage of them and it ends that way. There are also many conflicts about the mines in Guatemala. Many are against and also in favor for it. Due to their economic circumstances, they would favor it because it will provide a job for the family, but on the other hand, those who favor it don't seem to know the damage that mining will do to the planet and to our health. Seeing all of this made me think of how people could keep on living under these circumstances. The key is hope and faith. They all have hope that someone will

lend them a hand to help them step out of the situation they're in. But the base to all this is faith in God. I was very astounded at how even though the villagers don't have anything to offer, they open their hearts to you and welcome you as part of their family. They always have a smile on their faces and talk to you as though they have known you for years. That is the most valuable treasure I will keep in my heart forever.



Photos clockwise from top: Members of the community of Nuevo Corinto in the parish of San Jose; Derek Waring with a little friend in San Rafael; the family of Secundina Lucia Fuentes Velasquez in the community of "2 Noviembre" in San Jose with delegates (back row, left to right) Anthony McGuire, Fr. John Hynes, Derek Waring, and Eddie Velasquez.

Reflection by Justin Greenberg

While the entire experience in San Marcos, Guatemala was rewarding and insightful, the day that stands out the most is when one part of the group met up with about twenty teenagers from the community of Nueva Buena Vista. Some of them are receiving scholarships to attend high school, while others were there hoping to receive one. In the morning, we talked with the candidates and learned a little about who they were and their educational goals. It was amazing to see how dedicated they were in trying to receive an education often despite the lack of financial resources to do so. Later in the afternoon, Padre Fidel took us to the community of Nueva Buena Vista, one of his 48 parishes, where we were able to talk with the same young people and see where they live. Everyone met us with hugs, kisses, and thanks. Although we had not done anything in particular, it seemed to me that they were grateful that someone was trying to help the youth go to school and in turn develop a more educated and developed community. What I will remember most are the faces of the children and teenagers in this town. Although our conversations were brief, I believe that all of us in the Wilmington delegation learned a lot that day from our Guatemalan brothers and sisters.



*Photos left to right:
Guatemalan children, a view
of the mine near San Miguel,
Rory McLaughlin with some
new friends.*

**Reflection by Rory McLaughlin**

(originally published in bulletin of St. Catherine of Siena)

Prior to arriving in Guatemala on June 20, those who had not previously visited the country had a very vague idea about what awaited us in this foreign land. We had certainly all taken time to do at least some research in regards to their current affairs and culture, but I think inside what we knew, and what this trip solidified, was that there are some things in life that simply need to be experienced. We kept busy throughout most of our trip, visiting different project sites, villages, and farms throughout San Marcos, but among these activities none holds a higher significance than another. Rather, I think that these excursions worked together to paint a general picture of both the quality of life and current situation of the Guatemalan people. When a group of people has issues with deceiving politicians, impure water, thieving mining corporations, and even finding food to eat for the day on a regular basis, it tends to put a relative importance on the aspects that seem to dominate our lives here in the United States. In another light, it also allows us a glimpse of a society that has been depraved, and once stripped down, one can easily see that very little remains, essentially, faith and family. In my opinion, this was the most important lesson, and my main motivation to utilize my good fortune in life and my talents to give back to a culture that has already given so much to me.



Reflection by Xylene Graves

Being a middle school teacher in Philadelphia, I am used to working with disadvantaged youth. Ninety percent of my students are from low-income families. The economic plight of each family in Guatemala was not something that I was unfamiliar with, but what was unfamiliar was the way each family dealt with its situation, especially the children. With what seems to be little adult interference or prodding, the children (youth) of these communities have taken it upon themselves to create a better future for themselves. They are doing this by getting an education. They know the importance and value of an education and they are not afraid to go and get it. There are no nerds in San Marcos. They have enough passion for education to fight their way back into school after having to leave multiple times to help their families at home. And when their friends cannot attend school, the ones who are fortunate enough to go are willing to teach what they have learned to those who are less fortunate.

If I could bottle up what they have and take it back to my classroom, I would. These children have significantly greater disadvantages than my students, yet they refuse to let their situations define who they are or who they will become. This is the most powerful thing I witnessed while in Guatemala - the spirit, the will, and the passion of the children.

*Pictures far right:
The sorting plant at
Finca Nueva Buena
Vista; delegates
Leanne Renneisen,
Peter Lyons, Rory
McLaughlin, Mary
Jo Frohlich, Xylene
Graves, and Justin
Greenberg with new
friends; parishioners
in Fr. Fidel's
parish.*



*Pictures near right:
Joining
Guatemalan
brothers and sisters
in prayer; children
and mothers at
Finca Nueva Buena
Vista; at an
orphanage with
girls living there
and a 2nd year
seminarian in the
diocese.*



This newsletter is published quarterly, with input from members of the Solidarity Committee in Wilmington, members of previous delegations, or other interested parties. If you would like to contribute, please email Pat.Sormani@gmail.com or Brother Chris Posch at chrisposch2@aol.com.