



globalsolidaritypartnership

2003 ~ 2008 FIVE YEAR REPORT

Introduction

The Global Solidarity Partnership between the Diocese of Wilmington and the Diocese of San Marcos in Guatemala formally began in March of 2003. The idea of the partnership was initiated by the Most Reverend Michael A. Saltarelli, Bishop of Wilmington and the Most Reverend Alvaro Ramazzini, Bishop of San Marcos, and arose from Pope John Paul II's statement of 1999 which called for "One Church in America, north and south," and for concrete relationships of solidarity. The partnership is managed by committees in Wilmington and San Marcos and is facilitated with the assistance of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the official international relief and development agency of the U.S. Catholic community.

The Global Solidarity Partnership is a unique organization within the diocese because it is one of the few diocesan-sponsored institutions that focus on the universal church. It gives participants a global vision of our brothers and sisters outside of the United States.

Since 2003, a number of parishes and schools in the Diocese of Wilmington have participated in the partnership by participating in official partnership projects established by the committees in the two dioceses. A number of delegations from Wilmington have visited San Marcos, and delegations from San Marcos have visited Wilmington.

Each April, the Diocese of Wilmington holds *Solidarity Week* to celebrate this partnership. The week includes opportunities to meet men, women and children from San Marcos who are living and working in our diocese, a chance to get together and pray for the partnership and for our brothers and sisters in San Marcos as well as other activities.

Planning Process

Early in the partnership, a delegation of representatives from the Diocese of Wilmington met with their San Marcos counterparts, and developed a series of goals and objectives that is meant to put the partnership into action. These goals and objectives were reevaluated and updated during in the Spring of 2006. They focus on the following area:

- Campesino Movement / Finca Situation / Land Reform
- Formation of Catechists / Lay Pastoral Associates
- Health
- Potable Water
- Migration
- Relationship Building
- Youth and Young Adults

Projects

The objectives are being met through a series of projects that are being undertaken by diocesan parishes and schools. These projects are:

- Provide support and assistance to the children living on the **Coffee Fincas** (plantations) to allow them to attend school.
- To provide financial support for the **Diocesan Formation Center**, which serves as the main center for formation of lay catechists in San Marcos.
- To provide support for the **formation of lay catechists** in San Marcos and the formation of Hispanic catechists and other lay leaders in immigrant parishes in the Diocese of Wilmington.
- Provide nutrition, education and critically **needed drugs and medical supplies** used to treat chronic illnesses such as diabetes, tuberculosis, and AIDS, and to provide wheelchairs for the disabled.
- Provide support and assistance to Casa del Migrante, a **migrant house** in Tecun Uman, Guatemala.
- Provide support for Catholic Relief Services' "**Potable Water Project**" which provides clean, safe drinking water to communities in San Marcos, Guatemala.
- To provide **prayer support** for the Global Solidarity Partnership between the Diocese of San Marcos, Guatemala and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Delegations

An important aspect of the Global Solidarity Partnership relationship is delegations from Wilmington to San Marcos and vice versa.

Delegation participants and itineraries are selected depending on the needs of the partnership. For instance, delegates to San Marcos have been teachers from Catholic schools who are beginning to become involved in the partnership. They visited a village in San Marcos that the partnership working to raise money for a potable water system. Additionally, delegates from San Marcos are selected to complement the particular focus of the partnership.

Some of the parishes, schools and other organizations that have been represented on delegations to San Marcos include:

- Ursuline Academy
- St. Mark's High School
- St. Thomas More Oratory
- St. Benedict Pariah
- Padua Academy
- Resurrection Parish
- Holy Family Parish
- St. Ann School
- St. Dennis Parish
- St. Mary Magdalene Parish
- Christ the Teacher School

Parish involvement

Our parishes have been the cornerstone of our Global Solidarity Partnership. Here is a list of parishes and the projects in which they were involved:

- Holy Family Parish (potable water project& finca support)
- St. Mary Magdalen Parish (potable water project)
- St. Helena Parish (potable water project)
- Resurrection Parish (potable water project)
- St. Benedict Parish (potable water project)
- Good Shepherd Parish (potable water project)
- Immaculate Conception Parish - Marydel (potable water project & migrant house)
- St. Peter the Apostle Parish (potable water project)
- St. Mathews Parish (potable water project & finca support)
- St. Dennis (medical needs)
- St. Ann's - Bethany Beach (medical needs)
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish (migrant house)
- St. Luke/ St. Andrew Parishes (migrant house)

- St. Michael the Archangel Parish (migrant house)

School involvement

Our schools have been encouraged to participate in the partnership. Here are some examples of our schools and their involvement:

- St. Ann School (potable water project & support of finca)
- St. Thomas School (potable water project)
- St. Thomas More Academy (potable water project)
- Ursuline Academy (potable water project, support of finca & medical needs)
- St. Mathews School (potable water project & finca support)
- Corpus Christi School (finca support)
- St. Edmond 's Academy (finca support)
- St. Mark's High School (medical needs)
- Christ the Teacher School (medical needs)
- St. Elizabeth High School (migrant house)

Additionally, St. Mark's High School and Christ the Teacher Catholic Elementary School contributed to the Colegio Juan Diago, a school in San Marcos.

Others organizations in the diocese who have supported the partnership include:

- Knights of Columbus (potable water, finca support & diocesan formation center)
- Sisters of St. Francis (medical needs)
- DREs of the Diocese of Wilmington (lay catechists)

Messengers of Solidarity

In an effort to get immigrants from San Marcos who are living and working in the Diocese of Wilmington involved in the partnership, Office of Hispanic Ministry and the Global Solidarity Partnership began Messengers of Solidarity. The group was born during a Day of Prayer in June 2007 and engages in storytelling, faith sharing, and collaboration in organizing solidarity events. Many Solidarity Messengers participated in a delegation to San Marcos or were born in San Marcos. Thus, Solidarity Messengers share a common passion for building relationships together and telling the Good News to parishioners, friends, and neighbors. This fluid community

meets quarterly, rotating between Georgetown, Maryland, and Wilmington.

Solidarity Week

The annual observance of Solidarity Week began in 2005, to promote and celebrate the Partnership. The period in April was chosen since it includes the feast days of Saint Pedro de San José de Betancourt, the first canonized native of Guatemala and Saint Mark, the Patron Saint of San Marcos.

During Solidarity Week:

- Prayers of the Faithful are sent to all parishes to use during Solidarity Week to pray for the Partnership and for our brothers and sisters in San Marcos.
- Special Masses and/or prayer services are held.
- Often guest speakers are brought in to give special presentations and/or story-sharing experiences are held with immigrants from San Marcos who are living in the Diocese of Wilmington.
- Parishes, schools and other organizations are encouraged to celebrate Solidarity Week in their own way with suggestions provided by the Partnership committee.

The future of the Global Solidarity Partnership

The partnership between the Diocese of Wilmington and the Diocese of San Marcos has been very a very active and life-changing undertaking for participants.

As the Partnership enters its second half-decade, excitement is somewhat tempered by challenges including the financial hurdles that are common to all diocesan-sponsored entities these days. In recent months, the partnership has been unable to find a fund-raising program or project that would earn diocesan approval. Additionally, as parishes experience economic challenges, some pastors are reluctant to conduct fundraisers for the Partnership for fear of adversely effecting parish fundraising. If solutions to these challenges are not forthcoming in the near future, the operation of the Partnership may lose important components such as delegations to and from San Marcos and therefore lose momentum.

Other challenges the Partnership faces include an ongoing problem with communication with some organizations within our partner diocese; conflicting goals of the Partnership committees, Bishop Ramazzini and CRS; and an ongoing perception that the Americans are seen as the givers in the relationship.

The Partnership is also experiencing some leveling-off in the area of parish participation as it is more difficult to get parishes interested in engaging in the projects of the Partnership. While parish participation has leveled off, Catholic schools have shown an increasing interest in the Partnership.

Despite these challenges, the Global Solidarity Partnership Committee feels that the Partnership is an essential part of the Church in Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore, and should continue to operate and evolve.

Conclusion

The Global Solidarity Partnership Committee would like to thank Bishop Ramazzini, and especially Bishop Saltarelli, for establishing the Partnership and planting the seeds that have bore so much fruit. The Partnership has touched the lives of so many people in both dioceses, giving both dioceses a global vision of the Church.

The Partnership committee is committed to the future success of the Partnership as it moves into the future.