



## globalsolidaritypartnership

Summer 2008

Over 500 people gathered at Mary, Mother of Peace Church, Millsboro, to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of a special covenant partnership between the Dioceses of Wilmington and San Marcos, Guatemala. Participants were jubilant as they proclaimed in English and Spanish in loud voices, "This is the day the Lord has made, Alleluia!"

First generation immigrants from Guatemala and the Philippines as well as second generation immigrants from Europe told stories of their families, their lives, and their faith. Several of them squeezed together on a tiny rug, embraced, and joined hands to symbolize this unique partnership. The entire multi-



cultural Assembly tightly joined hands to pray the "Our Father" in "Spanglish."

For the past five years, the two dioceses have shared mutual prayer, support, and friendship. Some recent activities include the commencement of a third potable water project for the village of Hoja Blanca near Sinobal. Currently, its inhabitants of over thirty families have to walk three kilometers each day to fetch water and carry over their heads shoulders. Eleven Catholic schools in the Wilmington Diocese conducted "dress down days" to raise money for projects, including scholarships and paying the salary of one teacher in San Marcos for an entire year. Resurrection Parish in Wilmington just raised \$4,000.

Angel Perez, a Guatemalan from Immaculate Conception Parish, Marydel, thanked all participants and looks forward to the continued walking together in solidarity. Emma Field, a sixth grader, accepted an award on behalf of St. Ann School in gratitude for the school's outstanding contributions towards water and *finca* (plantation) projects.

The entire congregation remembered San Marcos Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini in prayer because he has recently received death threats due to his strong defense of human rights and land ownership. Bishop Ramazzini extended his best



wishes and prayers through a messenger. Wilmington Bishop Michael Saltarelli wrote to the congregation, "We are...grateful to the men and women of both dioceses who have pursued the efforts towards mutual support and encouragement. While some material projects have been accomplished, the real accomplishment is the growing bond in the knowledge of our common faith in Jesus Christ."

By Brother Christopher Posch, ofm

**I**nspired by the partnership between the Diocese of Wilmington and the Diocese of San Marcos, a group of Padua Academy students have come together to help raise money for the impoverished children in Guatemala. The group, moderated by Ms. Susan Long, Religious Studies Department Chair, is hoping to raise enough money through bake sales, bracelet sales, and dress down days to help 125 children on a plantation called "Los Delicias" get the shoes and clothing they need to attend school.

Bishop Saltarelli spoke to Ms. Long's activity group recently sharing his experience when he was appointed to the Board of Catholic Relief Services and was sent to Guatemala to see how Catholic Relief Services could be of service. The Bishop shared heart-breaking stories of female students who attend school



through only the second grade. These young girls are then pulled out of school, as they do not have the resources to secure transportation to the school that offers third and fourth grades, and are then put to work hammering a boulder to produce gravel for their families to sell. Boys attend school through fourth grade, but then they too are pulled from school and sent to work in coffee fields or on farms.

The Bishop praised the Padua students' efforts to raise money for the children of Guatemala: "You are paying attention to the Lord Jesus by ministering to the least. You are living the Gospel." He went on to encourage the students,

saying "Every little bit that you do here will bring about a lot of good in Guatemala."

By Shana L. Ruffner, Padua Academy

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About 50 people gathered at Immaculate Conception, Marydel, on Sunday, June 8 for a Day of Prayer and Solidarity. Many of our Guatemalan friends shared about life in San Marcos and here as immigrants in the United States. Many of our longtime parishioners expressed support and concerns. All shared in prayer and storytelling. Al Drushler from St. Marks High School created a magnificent presentation of memorable moments from five years of Solidarity.

Brainstorming and dreaming took place to determine some future goals. We discussed the next delegation to San Marcos scheduled for August.

The Guatemalan community from Immaculate Conception prepared and shared a magnificent meal and the day closed with a memorable mass celebrated by Fr. Michael Roark and con-celebrated by Frs. John Hynes and Chris Posch.

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The Diocese of Wilmington's Global Solidarity Partnership, through the fundraising efforts of parishes, schools and other organizations in diocese, has donated \$21,623.87 to bring potable water to the village of Hoja Blanca in the Sibinal region of San Marcos. There were 28 families that would benefit when the original study was done, but since then more people have moved into the area. Currently, villagers have to walk about 3 kilometers to get water. This is a job that is left primarily to the women and children of the community. The Hoja Blanca water project is the third such project funded by the Partnership.

Before a community in San Marcos can be considered for a potable water system, it must meet certain criteria set forth by the Diocese of San Marcos and CRS. The community must establish a local water committee to manage the system, prove it owns the rights to the water source, and be able to provide any needed natural materials such as sand and gravel.

Residents must also be willing to provide enough volunteer labor to construct the water system with the supervision of engineers from CRS and the Diocese of San Marcos. During the construction period of about two months, regular village activities are put on hold so villagers can work on the water system from about 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. It is not unusual for residents of remote villages to transport sacks of concrete, conduit and other supplies to their villages manually and by horseback.

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Notes: A copy of the Diocese of Wilmington' Global Solidarity Partnership Five-year Report is available online at [www.cdow.org](http://www.cdow.org).

We are looking for someone to take over the publication of this newsletter. If you are interested, contact Bob Krebs at 302-573-3116 or [rkrebs@cdow.org](mailto:rkrebs@cdow.org).