



A Seminarian in San Marcos

by Ian D. Buterbaugh

MY opportunity to travel to the diocese of San Marcos with the delegation from our Solidarity committee was an incredible blessing that has touched my life, will remain with me always, and will inform the way that I live my life and my vocation. As a seminarian rooted in a commitment to social justice, and with an academic and theoretical anticipation, my eyes and heart were prepared to see poverty, injustice, and even despair. Yet while with the people, and in their (and our) reality, my expectations were either nuanced or shattered, and I was able to see.



Some women and children of San Marcos

on our journey did not have more than a shed to give shelter to their family. Many could not give even one full meal to feed their family, including small children. It is an occasion of celebration and tears when a *community* is able to turn on a spigot.

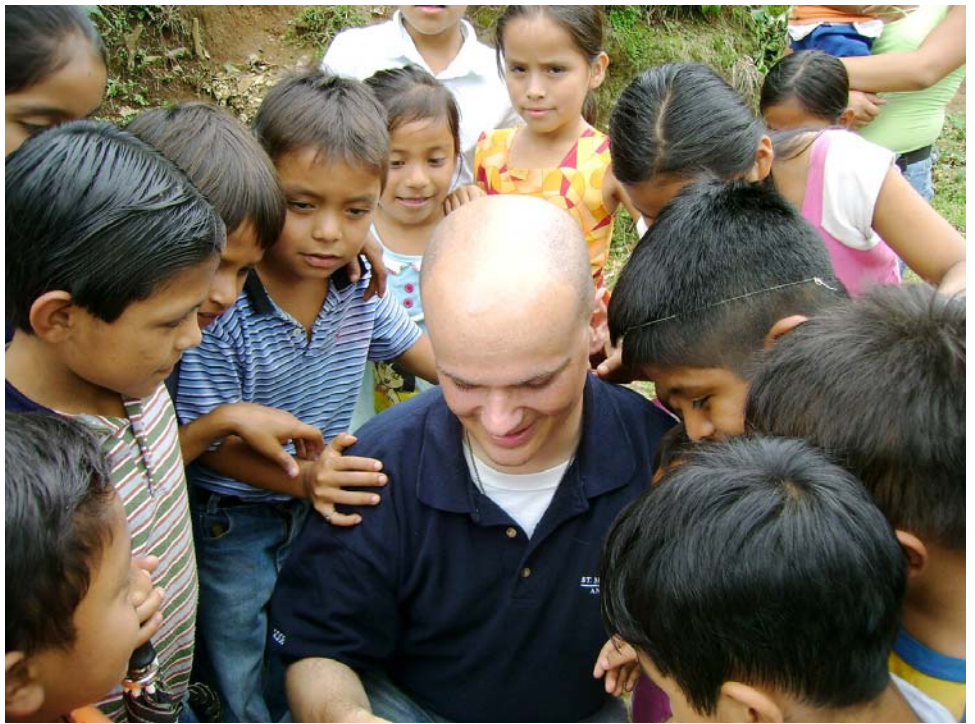
"Work confirms the profound identity of men and women created in the image and likeness of God". (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 275) "They commit grave injustice who refuse to pay a just wage or who do not give it in due time and in proportion to the work done." (CSDC, 302) The fruits of the incestuous web of power and injustice could be seen when we were invited into the communities and homes of the people we encountered. Many had been

Poverty. The level of poverty that we experienced in our time in San Marcos was staggering. How often do I take for granted that I have, and am able to drink, water from a faucet in my own home? How often do I get on my knees and thank God that I am able to receive a just wage, keep myself well fed and in good nutritional health, and even have excess? Many people we met

robbed of the job they had, the opportunity to seek other means of employment, the land on which they could provide for themselves, and so they were robbed of food, shelter, healthcare, and most significantly their dignity. We must imagine labor conditions before unions and regulations. We must imagine giant corporations coming into our area and raping the land of its natural resources without consultation with, or compensation to, us. We must imagine landowners denying our ability to work on that land or any other land, and have no recourse with the courts or law enforcement, because they share the wealth that is stolen from the hands of the people crying out. In these imaginations we may begin to empathize with our sister diocese.

Despair. What I did not encounter was the third expectation I mentioned; despair. One of the most profound pieces of my experience was having breakfast with a beautiful apostle of Jesus Christ, Bishop Ramazzini. We were asking him about the troubles of his people and diocese, and then asked him about what was good and hopeful. He said that the increase in the people's capacity for suffering gave him hope. We saw this throughout our entire journey. We did not see and hear despair in the people. We heard faith, hope, and love. We saw

whole communities gathering together to build the structures that would give them water. We saw the unity and resilience of a community entrenched in many years of wage and work deprivation. We saw two Mary Knoll sisters/ doctors giving healthcare, education, and life to the people. We saw a community of sisters whose entire ministry was to empower women out of prostitution, and into dignity and true love. I



I saw the universal Church **Ian Buterbaugh meets some of the beautiful children of San Marcos** living the Gospel with great love, simplicity, and devotion.

Hope. We must look to our brothers and sisters as sources of hope. We must not blind ourselves to the reality that the affect of our laws and policies reaches far beyond our borders, and so must never tire in our efforts to enact laws that are just and charitable. We must see and make efforts to share our gifts with our brothers and sisters, and be open to receiving theirs to us. Pray for peace, work for justice, and live in hope.

Ian Buterbaugh is a seminarian for the Diocese of Wilmington. He participated in a delegation to San Marcos in August 2007 with Meg Kane Smith, Tony Imhof, Sr. Sally Russell and Mary Jo Frohlich.

From November 9 - 16, 2007, Maryknoll Sister Mary Lou Daoust, a physician, working in San Marcos and Rev. Ademar Barilli, director of Migrant House in San Marcos, visited the Diocese of Wilmington. The Wilmington Global Solidarity Committee kept them very busy traveling across Delaware and Maryland's Eastern Shore talking to hundred's of people about their work in San Marcos and about the partnership between out two dioceses.

Br. Chris Posch authored the following report on the visit, focusing on Fr. Ademar's visit to Marydel and Sister Mary Lou's presentation at Resurrection Parish.

FATHER Michael Roark and Immaculate Conception parishioners welcomed **Fr. Ademar Barilli** on Saturday, November 10th. Fr. Ademar spoke at the 5:00 PM English mass and 7:00 PM Spanish prayer meeting known as *el culto*. Between speaking events, Fr. Roark and lay leaders shared a delicious dinner with Fr. Ademar.

Fr. Ademar reflected, "Being Catholic is being universal, it means seeing no more borders... Immigration is not...about the wall, or arresting immigrants... The immigrant reality [is] losing everything in the storms, of entire communities completely disappearing... At the Migrant House, which has already been visited by 100,000 people, we listen to thousands of stories from people who say: 'I either leave or starve to death.'"

Fr. Ademar acknowledged that "it is important for our two sister dioceses to find solutions and proposals at the Church level. The least we ask for is that immigrants be treated as human beings, as people whose universal rights are



respected; if you work the same as everyone else, then you have the same rights as that person."

Fr. Ademar concluded, "I think the average North American is very uninformed and that is why it is so important to broaden the conversation with the community so

Tony Imhof, Fr. Ademar, Sr. Mary Lou and Br. Chris at Holy Family Parish on November 16, 2007

change for the better.”

Guatemalan parishioner Angel Perez, elated about Fr. Ademar’s visit, graciously stated that “the dinner and the visit were so special. We waited so long for it. There were moving testimonies of the crosses that immigrants carry.”

Weeks of collections, within the Guatemalan community in Marydel, resulted in presenting Fr. Ademar \$1,000 for the Migrant House. Fr. Ademar expressed heartfelt gratitude, sang songs accompanied by his magnificent guitar playing, and shared beaming smiles of joy. Fr. Ademar also visited St. Luke, Ocean City; St. Michael the Archangel, Georgetown; and St. Ann, Bethany Beach and was given a warm welcome by the staff and students at St. Elizabeth High School in Wilmington.

Sr. Mary Lou Daoust, a Maryknoll physician at several clinics throughout San Marcos, spoke at masses at Resurrection Parish in Wilmington on November 9 & 10.

Expressing gratitude for the prayers and support that has saved and changed lives, Sr. Mary Lou shared that “we have the chance to assist many people with tuberculosis in receiving medication that they cannot afford because it costs between 40 and 45 dollars a month and 89% of the population of San Marcos lives at poverty level with less than \$3 a day. Also, another one of the water projects has been implemented, an aqueduct system for the distribution of this precious liquid.”

Sr. Mary Lou also spoke at a screening of *Estamos Aqui* at the University of Delaware, Padua Academy, St. Thomas the Apostle School and at a conference with physicians and care-givers at the Delaware Division of Public Health in Dover.

Fr. Ademar and Sr. Mary Lou also spoke at the University of Delaware Campus Ministry, St. Catherine of Siena, Holy Family, St. Matthew School, St. Mark High School and Ursuline Academy.

URSULINE Academy will be collecting 4-inch gauze and children's vitamins for Sr. Mary Lou's clinics in San Marcos. Any individuals or organizations interested in donating these items may drop them off at the Ursuline main office located at Pennsylvania Avenue and Franklin Street during school hours from December 10 - 14. For more information, contact Meg Kane Smith at megkanesmith@comcast.net.

PROJECTS of the Diocese of Wilmington/Diocese of San Marcos Global Solidarity Partnership are designed to help meet the needs of our sister diocese, bring our two dioceses closer together in solidarity and help all of us understand that we are all God's children with our own gifts to share.

If you and your parish are interested in learning more about any of these opportunities, contact the members of the Diocesan Solidarity Committee. The committee has suggested ways that parishes and schools can begin to build a relationship with the people of San Marcos. To get more information about these suggested projects, please phone Andy Zampini at 302-655-9624, Ext 210 or by e-mail at azampini@ccwilm.org. Project descriptions are also available on the Diocese of Wilmington's web site at <http://www.cdow.org/solidarity.html>. Please consider joining the partnership.