



In this issue: In February a delegation of 8 traveled to San Marcos. Their time in Guatemala included visits to schools and clinics, the homes of Guatemalan friends, and meetings with new friends. Read more about it, and the budding relationship between Ss. Peter & Paul and some Guatemalan communities below.

Did you know we have a Facebook Page? The name of the group is San Marcos Wilmington Global Solidarity Partnership. Anyone can request membership. Look for more frequent updates coming soon!

Are you interested in going on a delegation to San Marcos this summer? Let us know!

On May 21, 2017 an interview with Alex Handy, a recent delegate to San Marcos will air on Catholic Forum, a half-hour program heard each Sunday morning at 10:05 on 101.7 FM and 1150 AM WDEL in Wilmington, Delaware and on www.wdel.com. Catholic Forum is also heard every Sunday morning at 9:05 on 100.9 FM WAAI in Hurlock/Cambridge, Maryland. After it airs on broadcast radio, the program is podcast. It is available anytime at www.cdown.org/communications.

Fr. Jim Nash, Pastor, Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, MD, had this to say after his recent trip to Guatemala: “This trip to Guatemala in support of our Global Solidarity Partnership was inspiring to say the least. This was my second time on a delegation and if I could send every member of any parish in our diocese on one of these delegations, I would. It puts so much of life in perspective and has helped me to appreciate the blessings in my life. I think the one thing that inspired me most was spending time with the children. They have so few worldly goods but they have an inner joy that I seldom see. While we did what we could to lift them with items we brought from the States and hopefully shared our love of the Lord with them, they gave us more than we could have ever imagined. Thank you to all the people we met in Guatemala – I know we will carry you in our hearts every day.”



Picture right: Martha Ryan, Fr. Jim Nash, and Sharon Dundon with some children at San Luis School, El Tumbador.

Reflection by Sharon Dundee, Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, MD

On a very warm morning in Guatemala, in a two-room cement shack with questionable roofing, dirt floors, and cut out holes in the cement for windows, 25 children were in various stages of writing and arithmetic. Meanwhile my children in a security alarm-laden school, clothed in uniforms with ties, designer shoes and socks, were likely thinking about getting home to their iPads to watch the next episode of whatever the show-du-jour is on Netflix. The Guatemalan children were studying with ONE teacher from educational grades 1 to 6. Sixth grade is the top of the average learning (if your parents value school at all and you aren't needed to help the family survive financially). If you are fortunate you may go on to "high school" in the next town –but most don't and especially not from the poor rural school of San Luis which our parish has chosen to support. With much love and effort here at home, numerous teachers, students, parents, and parishioners gathered supplies, uniforms and financial aid, identified as needs for this school. The one thing that struck me most during our visit, was what was NOT needed. There was no jolt needed to the spirit of this small poverty stricken school.



The children were smiling, full of play, and eager to meet new people. They demonstrated pride in the letters they wrote in correspondence with our students at home, were grateful for the aide being provided, and shared their hearts, games, and food with us. Many mothers came to demonstrate unity with the school and our delegation. The Catholic schools my children attend have a wonderful motto of development of the mind, body, and spirit of each student. Obvious needs for the San Luis children were for improved body through proper sanitation, medical care, and nutrition, and for the mind through school supplies, improved facility, extension of learning years to advance literacy. But spirit, nope nothing needed, God has that covered.



Pictures top right and left: Students at San Luis school, in El Tumbador. Picture bottom right: Sharon Dundon and Martha Ryan playing a game with students at the school.

Look for an update on recent works of solidarity in the next newsletter!

Reflection by Alex Handy, Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, MD

Guatemala—

I expected to see a poor country with people needing assistance. Experiencing it is quite different. The incredible outpouring to us from the people we met and their gratitude to us was humbling. What’s remarkable to me is that so many of the people have so little, yet they somehow struggle on and survive. My question is “where is the conscience of the people within the country that could make a difference in these people’s lives?”

The area we seem most capable of assisting is in education. Not just through sixth grade, where most of it now ends, but in extending the opportunity for children to be educated in the later grades as well. I believe that could provide long term improvement economically and socially in Guatemala.

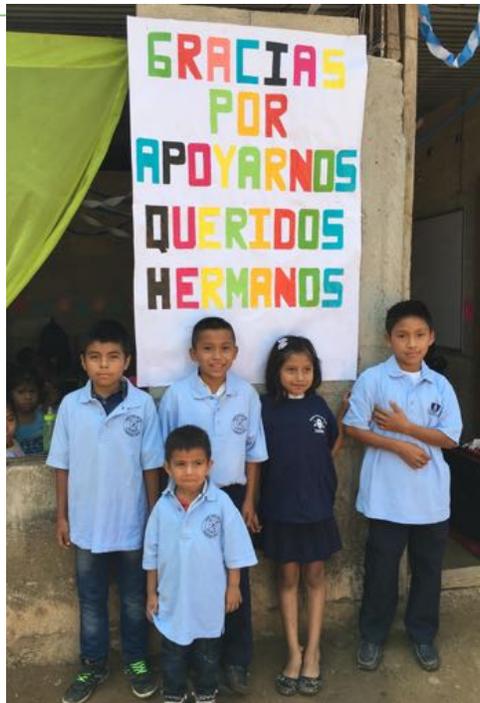
This was a wonderful experience for me and my teammates. We became very close and that part of the trip was as meaningful as any.

Ken Doyle, Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, MD

The trip was quite rewarding, as to what we could offer, and even more so, as to what we received. I believe the major word of the week, was the whole ordeal was very HUMBLING... "we expected poor", but, not quite to the extent that we witnessed (especially in this day and time). It was a big difference, compared to what we saw in Guatemala City and Antigua, as to what the people we visited in the San Marcos area had to deal with.



The school (we adopted) was a two room shack with dirt floors, no windows or doors and desks that looked like they were from the 1800's. Hopefully, we can remedy some of that, and give them a place of their own. The convent and clinic, where we stayed for 6 days, was very nice. The clinic was well run, and seemed to be used quite extensively. The Sister, and what I called, the little sisters, were fabulous. What a fun loving and devoted group.



Thank you for your support, dear brothers...



Parents of San Luis school, Mike Brady, Fr. Rigoberto, and a water filter.

Reflection by Charles Fitzgerald, Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, MD

While I had some expectations and understood the goals of our trip beforehand, I was overwhelmed by this experience as it actually unfolded. The poverty and time lapse compared to the USA was just shocking to me. My emotions in seeing how people must live and the conditions that the children grow up in are just amazing. Yet day after day, the people exist in these conditions and have great faith in the Lord. The children smile and go faithfully to school and seem to behave and love their teachers and the fact that they can get some education. It was indeed humbling and very sad to see the conditions and the fact the government doesn't help them very much. There seems to be no conscience for these people except for what we, and others like the priests and nuns and private clinics, provide. I was so moved, I cried many times at what I saw. I definitely want to continue to help in some way and encourage everyone to experience this journey to see how much help we can give these sincere people.

I experienced faith that far surpasses mine and that of many in our country. Faith in the midst of poverty, famine and illness. God has truly blessed these people with faith in the midst of all their suffering. While medical assistance and supplies are needed, my focus truly was the children. I want to help in some ways to afford them better education, better schools, more schooling and therefore a better life. My prayers will always be with the children, Priests and Nuns that I met. Hopefully, some day this government will recognize its much less fortunate people and help them. Until then, I will be praying fervently for them.

This journey opened my eyes not only wanting to help the children, but it afforded an opportunity for me to really look at myself and make improvements in myself and how I sometimes interact with my family and others in my community. I have thanked God daily since returning home that I had the opportunity to experience this journey and sincerely would like to return again.



Photos, above left to right: Sunday Mass in San Pablo, student at San Luis School with backpack of gifts. Photo right: suitcase with medical supplies for clinic housed in convent.

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