



In this issue: Death of Bishop Trinidad, reflections from March's delegation to San Marcos, photos from Solidarity 15th anniversary celebration.

Bishop Carlos Enrique Trinidad Gomez of our sister diocese in San Marcos, Guatemala, died on May 9. We of the Wilmington diocese were blessed by a visit from the bishop in October of last year. Fr. John Hynes, chair of the Wilmington Global Solidarity Committee wrote, "We accompany all of you in San Marcos in your grief upon the death of your bishop Monsenor Carlos Trinidad-Gomez. He spent 10 days with us last October. All were enchanted with his humility and sensitivity and with his decision to spend so much time among us as a sign of the importance of our brotherly bonds." He will surely be missed. There will be a Memorial Mass at St. Catherine of Siena, Wilmington, on Sunday, June 17, 2018, at 10:30 am.



Bishop Malooly, Bishop Trinidad, and Fr. John Hynes during last October's visit.

From March 10 – 19, a delegation from Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, traveled to San Marcos. Delegation members were Mary Jo Frohlich (Wilmington Global Solidarity Committee member), Fr. Jim Nash, pastor at Ss. Peter & Paul, and parishioners Diana Albrecht, Michael Brady, Sharon Spence, Ramon Gras, Martha Wheatley, and Sarah Flynn.

Sharon Spence, on "Building a Relationship and a School."

My main purpose in participating in this most recent trip was to meet with the community members of Finca San Luis in El Tumbador. We hoped to take concrete steps towards the acquisition of land on which to build a school. Their make-shift school has been in two different temporary buildings on private lots during my three trips to Guatemala. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of their community leaders, members of the Diocese of San Marcos, and members of our Saints Peter and Paul delegation, we made progress at our meeting on 3/13/18 towards the goal of building a school.

Her name is Archel Ochoa Guzmán, but she goes by Elva. How she has managed to teach over 25 enrolled children in Grades 1-6 alone is amazing. Additionally, there are other younger students who sit in on some classes since there is no room for an official Kindergarten. I have observed her moving seamlessly from one classroom to the other, one group to another, one board to another, one topic to another. And she does this with practically no materials of instruction. She has several curriculum books, and the students have composition books for note taking. They have no student textbooks for any subjects. In July 2017 I spent a week working with her, teaching the students in grades 4-6. It was exhausting, hot, dusty, uncomfortable, and goats and sheep would walk by the window each morning as I taught students animal vocabulary in English. God truly has a sense of humor and amazing timing! But, what really mattered is that the students were eager to learn and excited to have an extra



Elva and Sharon.

teacher. The less than desirable conditions were overshadowed by God's presence and His love. I fell in love with the children, left part of my heart in that little school, and couldn't wait to return. On this trip in March, I was excited to see the students, Elva, the parents, and to meet the new teacher, Brenda Mazariegos, sent by the Ministry of Education to support Elva. Several members of our delegation visited the school three times.

His name is Mario. We became friends during my stay at the convent in July 2017. Each afternoon or evening, Mario and his mom, and sometimes dad, would stop by the convent for a visit. We played Animal Memory, Connect Four, Jenga, and put puzzles together. His mother is amazing with him, always teaching him new words, proper manners, and how to love others. While back in the States, I missed the sparkle in his eyes, the sound of his voice calling my name, and the special moments we shared together at the convent. We were reunited in March and had the opportunity to read some Bible stories and play more games. I was pleasantly surprised that he is quite knowledgeable of Biblical figures and events. He and his mom made me a card, which I will always cherish.



Sharon and Mario and the card.



Children with bags of books and dental supplies.

At the heart of the Guatemalan Solidarity Partnership are God and His people. Building relationships has been the most fulfilling aspect of my participation. While we can help provide school supplies, school uniforms, shoes, dental hygiene products, and medical supplies to the communities, it is most rewarding to get to know the Guatemalan people.

God calls us to love one another. We love best in person. One trip to Guatemala to visit the communities and gain an understanding of the people, cultures, and realities was not enough for me. It is through the return trips and the time spent in building these relationships that I have experienced God's love to the fullest. I anxiously await my next trip in July to continue building relationships throughout San Marcos and a school on Finca San Luis.

Diana Albrecht, "I saw the Face of God..."

I really didn't know what to expect on my first mission trip with Saints Peter and Paul Church to Guatemala. Both my daughter and son attended ones during their high school years in poverty stricken rural America, fixing porches and painting houses. At first, I believed that this was how I would be useful but when I learned this was a mission trip built on the ongoing relationships with the people of San Marcos, I went in with an open heart. Self doubt still crept in—If I didn't speak their language, how could I add value and share my faith with the people of Guatemala?

I learned that language has no barriers when it is faith based. The people of San Marcos opened their hearts and I graciously accepted their love. I saw the Face of God in so many ways. Natural disasters with earthquakes and hurricanes have hit the area with crumbling churches, but it hasn't rocked their strong Catholic faith. I saw the Face of God in the priests and nuns who have dedicated their lives to God by taking the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Father Rigoberto travels to over 45 parishes to spread the good news. His devotion to his faith and the people he serves was humbling. The Maryknoll nuns, Sr. Jane and Sr. Mary Lou were an inspiration. Both are doctors and have devoted their life serving the poor and sick in San Marcos by overseeing 48 medical clinics in the area and empowering women and men to run them. I saw the Face of God in the San Luis community as they came together for the greater good of building a school for their children. They were so grateful for our help with purchasing the land, and so proud to be able to build it for their community. I saw the Face of God with my fellow mission members. From Mary Jo's warm hello greeting to everyone she met, to seeing Ramon quietly reading scripture as we traveled from one community to another, to Mike's devotion to clean water, I know God was with us the entire time. I saw the Face of God in Senora Spence's love and devotion to the school children and with Father Nash's ease of taking complex scripture and making it all relatable. I saw the Face of God in Martha's inner strength that is both calming and assured and Sarah's strong convictions and thoughtful reflections. Sarah

has renewed my faith knowing the future of our Church is strong.

Keeping an open heart enabled me to pause, reflect and see the Face of God during my time in Guatemala and strengthen my Catholic faith. My hope is that I continue to keep that spirit alive and spread the good news about the gracious and giving people of Guatemala. They will be forever etched in my heart.

Sarah Flynn, A Life-Changing Trip

My experience in Guatemala was life changing. I've had my fair share of mission trips all over the place and this trip has been the most impactful to me. It's one thing to see the conditions and people in pamphlets and on tv, but to experience the immense love and compassion that these people have really gives you a new perspective. What stood out to me the most was the children in the school.

The entire time I was in high school, I couldn't wait to finish up and get out of there. I didn't like school whatsoever. But seeing how excited these kids were to just be at school and learn made me regret all the rushed years of schooling. The fact that all these kids just wanted to learn but it was hard to get a school situated really broke my heart. They were so happy with their single room school while I was complaining about my school not having an actual building.



Sarah with a new friend.

I was supposed to be helping teach the kids there, but they were the ones who taught me. They taught me to appreciate what I have, they taught me that it's important to keep smiling, they even taught me Spanish! These are all things that I will hold near to my heart and live out everyday.

Martha Wheatley, "God was everywhere..."

When I envisioned going on a mission trip I thought I would be using my hands to help people who needed things. On this mission trip to Guatemala I used my heart to help people who needed encouragement. As we traveled to remote communities nestled in the mountains of this beautiful country I wondered what I could do for the people. I came to realize they just needed us to hear them. They organized themselves to present to our delegation a plan of what they wanted to accomplish. They made us feel welcome with food and drink. They always greeted us with a smile and a hug. They were intent on explaining their humble wishes for improvements to their community. They wanted us to understand what they could do with our help. In Guatemala they don't need our physical labor, they need our support so that they can shore up their faithful community, and with our love and support I have no doubt they will do just that.

Father Rigoberto and Sister Bernarda let us know that it is vitally important that the people of Guatemala should have "skin in the game" and put forth the effort to organize themselves for a purpose. We saw that this was happening and I believe with our help they will be successful. A perfect example was the community of El Tumbador where we at Sts. Peter and Paul would like to help build a school. We were frustrated that the land we planned on using was no longer available. Father and Sister explained that it wasn't our job to find the land, it was the community's responsibility to work out a plan. When we got to El Tumbador I was so impressed! They had a committee with a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, alternates, and presented us with two properties. They were in agreement about what they wanted and committed to contributing manpower and raising what funds they could. The elderly women were crying tears of joy by the end of the meeting. I will never forget that. They really understood what a school means to their community.

I feel so blessed to have been included on this trip to Guatemala. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the land and the people. God was everywhere and in everything. We are doing good with our "hands" because we are part of the body of Christ.

On Sunday, April 22, we celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Global Solidarity Partnership between the dioceses of San Marcos and Wilmington with a special Mass and dinner. Below are some pictures from the festivities!



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 updates coming soon!

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.