



In this issue: Some reflections from summer delegations to San Marcos, recent works of solidarity and a few words about other events. Two delegations took place over the past summer, with most members from Ss. Peter & Paul in Easton, MD.

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

We're excited to announce there will be two delegations from Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, MD, to San Marcos again this year! The next delegation will take place from February 15 – 23!

Reflection from John F. Lovell, delegate from Ss. Peter and Paul, Easton

Traveling to Guatemala with the second of two delegations from Sts. Peter and Paul parish was eye-opening, at times challenging (both physically and emotionally), perspective-changing, and ultimately very rewarding. Personally, I had never traveled to any Latin American country before, nor had I ever visited a country where poverty is more the rule than the exception. I did not speak the language, was not familiar with Guatemala's history or current situation (political, social or ecclesial), and only vaguely knew even the people I was traveling with. So while I began this journey with many unknowns, questions and definitely a few doubts, I came away from it realizing that I had been profoundly blessed, and that the source of that blessing was primarily the people. I was powerfully reminded that in God's Providence, very often the greatest gifts we receive come "wrapped in flesh" – as with the Incarnation – and that community is one the key channels through which He manifests His Divine will and dispenses His grace, both to individuals and to the world.

As a cradle Catholic and son of two very faithful, lifelong disciples (including a father who trained for 11 years to become a Jesuit priest), I had been hearing all of my life about "the universal Church." But being in Guatemala, celebrating mass and praying along with members of communities whose economic status has almost nothing in common with our own, interacting with dedicated nuns and priests who are giving their lives to serve others in Christ's name, and praying and traveling with other committed believers – all of this clarified and exemplified this truth in an entirely new way for me. We are all members of one Body, and are all ultimately after the same goal, beautifully expressed by the prophet Micah: "What does the LORD require



Celebrating Mass in a mountain community called Igualdad.

of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” The endless, rolling tableau of poverty and difficulty you witness as you travel through Guatemala can be almost overwhelming, but I found that what was even more impressive, and ultimately what I will remember the most from this journey (besides the stunning physical beauty of this tropical country), is the warm and loving spirit of the Guatemalan people.

If I could somehow bottle up that spirit and love we experienced there, drink a sip or two of it a day and share it with the people I come across, I know I would become a more holy and humble person. Holiness and humility: these are perhaps the most important qualities any human being can bring to the world, and we experienced both profoundly through the people of Guatemala. My prayer – for those I traveled with and met down there, for myself, my family, and my parish – is that through a partnership with some of these remarkable communities, we will learn to share these spiritual resources with one another abundantly and thereby help to bring about in some small way “the Kingdom of God” that Jesus preached as our mission and means of salvation.



Visiting a poor school in El Tumbador.

Reflection from Barbara Brady, delegate from Ss. Peter & Paul.

My trip to Guatemala was wonderful and exhausting. I learned about the people, transportation, education and Catholic churches in the San Marcos diocese. The people were very welcoming and hugged us at the schools and churches. We went by van on windy rough roads and where the van was not able to go, we had to ride in pick-up trucks with two stick shifts. The rides were the part of the trip that was exhausting, because you were constantly bounced around, up and down.

We visited 4 schools and they all were in great need when compared to our U.S. schools. We were most interested in the St. Luis school with the one teacher with dirt floor and two rooms teaching first through third in one room and fourth through sixth in a second room with just a doorway between them. The schools only went up to the sixth grade and parents would have to pay for high school education which the majority could not afford. The Catholic churches were well attended by the people and they would hug us all during the Sign of Peace at all the Masses. Music at the Masses were similar to the music that our Hispanic Music Ministry does at our Hispanic Mass at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church.



Music ministry at a church at a finca.

Recent works of Solidarity (July - December 2016)

Resurrection Parish, Wilmington, contributed \$1478 towards medical needs and catechist help.

St Margaret of Scotland, Glasgow, DE, contributed \$5090 towards 20 de Octubre medical clinic and towards priest stipends.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Bear, DE, contributed \$3000 towards scholarships.

Christ the Teacher school, Newark, DE, contributed \$1000 towards scholarships.

Most Blessed Sacrament school, Berlin, MD, contributed \$1000 towards scholarships.

An anonymous donor contributed \$3747 towards purchase of a sonogram and towards scholarships.

Ken Schisler, from Ss. Peter & Paul, wrote in his reflection,

Guatemala is a beautiful place from a distance, but up close it can be a living hell of inhumanity. The poverty and all of its effects are profound, quite beyond adequate words.

At the same time, the great faith of the Priests and Sisters in Guatemala is deeply inspiring. There is great despair in Guatemala, but the Church is making a difference in the lives of real people - babies, schoolchildren, the elderly, and families. The need is great, but so are the results from the people of faith in our diocese doing what they can to support the project. I am so thankful that our diocese participates in the Guatemala Solidarity Project with the Diocese of San Marcos.



Left: Sor Irene with an elderly friend.

Right: Theresa Metelski from Ss. Peter & Paul with children and teachers in school at finca Iqualidad.



Delight Night was held on October 15, 2016, at Holy Family Church in Newark, and featured a selection of wine pairings and delicious international foods. Our visitors from San Marcos, Celeste Orozco and Egon Salvador y Salvador, also were able to attend. A good time was had by all!

The October delegation from San Marcos included visits to Resurrection Parish, Ss. Peter & Paul, Ursuline Academy (see picture below), St. Thomas More Oratory at the University of Delaware, Christ the Teacher School, Most Blessed Sacrament School, Berlin, MD. If you're reading this newsletter and you were at any of these events and would like to write a reflection on your gathering, please contact us.



Egon (on left) and Celeste (on right) at Ursuline Academy with members of Meg Kane-Smith's social justice class during recent visit from Guatemala.

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.