

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 7



In this issue: There were 2 delegations to San Marcos from Wilmington this summer. Read about some of their thoughts and see pictures in this issue. More to follow next time!

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!

The Bishop of San Marcos, Bishop Carlos Trinidad, is coming to Wilmington! The visit will be in the second half of October. Stay tuned for more details!

Fr. John Hynes, pastor St. Catherine of Siena, Wilmington, and chair of the Wilmington Global Solidarity Partnership committee, had this to say of his trip to San Marcos this summer:

I stood and read the plaque: “Father Stanley Rother spent 12 of his 18 years of priesthood among the indigenous people of Santiago Atitlan, speaking their Tzu-Tu-jil dialect and visiting their homes.” Two months ago, Pope Francis declared Father Rother as a martyr. We were at the Church of Santiago Atitlan, in Guatemala, on the shore of the beautiful lake, surrounded by mountains, which every tourist goes to visit. The room had a small altar, and all around it were Fr. Rother’s personal effects, vestments, chalice, pascal candle and clothes. Against one of the walls a modest plaque marked where his blood stained the floor when he was killed by a government death squad in 1981. He had known it was coming. At friends’ urging he had left the country when his life was threatened, but returned four months later. “When I am killed, don’t cry for me” he told friends. “The Shepherd does not abandon the sheep when danger comes....”



The eight of us who took part in Mass there were completing our eight-day solidarity delegation from Wilmington to our sister diocese of San Marcos. Father Rother’s room, and the simple shrine in the 400 year old church where his heart is entombed, represented for me the meaning of solidarity, Church and priesthood: “The person who loses his life for my sake discovers who he really is...greater love than this, no one has to lay down life for your friends.” We had been meeting these persons throughout our trip: parish priests like Fr. Silverio Chun, Fr. Delfino Perez, Fr. Toribio Pineda and a young priest Fr. Rigoberto just recovered from 14 months of illness – all traveling constantly over mountains, or bad roads past 500-foot gorges to visit as many as 50 separate community chapels in a single parish, with as many as 20,000 people. We met women like Sister Bernarda, a tireless diocesan coordinator; Sister Irene Director of Postulants and director of a health center; and Sisters Jane and Mary Lou of Maryknoll, both of them MD’s supervising over 30 health clinics and training local medics. It is a reward to associate with people like this who labor where so much is at stake. They make the world better, they remind us how we can be better. They have the same spirit as their martyrs.

See www.cdow.org/solidarity.html for more information on the Solidarity Partnership.

In God's design, the Church here needs to encounter the Church there in order to recognize itself. No priest or bishop or other minister of the Church in the United States faces martyrdom for the faith in the form of being attacked or killed. But we are equally called to do what martyrs do; lay down our lives for our brother and sisters.

When the Church lives for others, especially the people on the edge of society: the racial minority, the poor, the immigrant, the single mother, those marginalized by their sexual identity, the unwelcome outsider the Church becomes strong because it walks in the steps of Jesus.

Solidarity with the people of San Marcos, who are poor in technical resources but rich in faith offers us a precious gift. We have accepted it. When you "lose" yourself, you will find yourself.



Site of assassination of Fr. Rother.

You do not need to go to Guatemala to experience this conversion. It awaits you here. The solidarity journeys induce conversion. Most of us will not return to Guatemala but the conversion remains. It sends us out in gratitude, to give what we have been given. As it sent Fr. Stanley Rother.

Reflection from Charles Fitzgerald, parishioner Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton.

Returning home, I realize that I have received much more than I have given. The people that we meet make a lasting impression of friendship, spirit and faithfulness in God and The Holy Spirit. We think we are helping people who have so little, who sometimes are forgotten, but they have so much more than we do in certain circumstances!! They know how to give from the heart, because this is all they have. They may be poor in physical needs, but so rich in spirit and faith. God has provided them with such great beauty in their homeland, the mountains, volcanoes and the Flora. They understand how to live off of what he has given them, without being greedy. I could go on, but everyone who is reading this understands what I'm trying to say.



Charles Fitzgerald, Sherrie Connolly, Ss. Peter & Paul with postulants in San Pablo.

I am so impressed with the priests, Fathers Rigoberto, DelFino and Silverio, the nuns and postulants at the convent in San Pablo, the Bishop, Sor Bernarda and Celeste. They have now become our friends, as we have become fellow advocates in assisting their congregations. There is just an overwhelming feeling of faith and spiritualism that takes over almost from the moment that we arrive in Guatemala, from the trip through their country, the welcome and hospitality at the convent from the Franciscans, fervently celebrating the mass, our prayer reflections and our daily trips when we meet those lovely children, the parents and the church members.

This trip for me was very special because we came into contact with many more people at the various parishes and chapels that we visited. We were able to experience the "fire" and "spirit" of their faithfulness. It's just amazing for me to see the excitement in the celebration of the Mass. If only we could bring back and uncork some of their spirit and faithfulness. It would be wonderful if they were closer, so we could see them more often!

Father Evers' 2-word saying, "GOD PROVIDES" has dynamic meaning to me after this trip. Not only how God provided for our safety and well-being, but how He provides for them. On this trip, there was no absolute foundation for the things that we accomplished, but we accomplished much. The hurdles that we thought about before going, turned out be mere speed bumps when we were there. A simple prayer or thought, GOD PROVIDES, has such great power.

My hope is that we can continue to build on the base that is now established, continue to assist the Franciscan nuns and the clinic and continue to see the fervent Face of God in our Guatemalan friends.



Postulants and Sor Irene with delegates Dalila Rivera and Perla Ruiz of Ss. Peter & Paul.

Reflection by Carol Backer, parishioner at St. Catherine of Siena, Wilmington

Before I left for Guatemala I knew very little about the country and unfortunately I knew very little Spanish. The country side is lush and green with trees and vegetation. There are tall mountains and even volcanoes and a beautiful lake that we visited. There are farms growing on the sides of every mountain. Coffee is their major crop that they export to the US. The Guatemalans don't drink coffee. The banana farms are owned by a conglomerate owned by US companies. The Guatemalan people work the farms but get paid very little for their labor.

The Guatemalans, although poor compared to our standard of living in the US, are rich in kindness and hospitality. They are ready to assist you with anything you need. They are quick to smile and greet you as a friend. I know some Spanish words and phrases but not enough to get my ideas across or to understand what someone is trying to say to me. But it really didn't matter to the people I met. They were very patient and tried to be helpful. Not once did anyone get annoyed or impatient with me.

I started thinking about how people back home would respond to someone like me. Would they be so patient and kind as the people of Guatemala were to me? I can now more than ever empathize with the immigrants who come to our country and cannot speak English. How lost they must feel, and sometimes unwelcome. Some of them even face hostility and even feel threatened.

While we were there we learned about a priest from Oklahoma, Fr. Stanley Rother, who gave up his life for the Guatemalan people. He was a true sign of the love that Jesus taught us. This trip helped me to see that God is in all of us.

Read more reflections in the next issue! In the meantime, enjoy the following pictures.



Smiling students.



Top left: 2nd Delegation members at Santa Ana school in El Rodeo, back row l-r: Emma Field, Fr. John Hynes, Ben Annone, Philip Annone, Carol Backer, Miriam Sigler, Mark Record.

Bottom: 1st Delegation members with Bishop Trinidad, front row l-r: Ramon Gras, Sharon Spence, Dalila Rivera, Bishop Trinidad, Perla Ruiz. Back row l-r: Sherrie Connolly, Fr. Glen Evers, Charlie Fitzgerald.

Bottom Left: In heaven there are no borders. (Fresco at Casa del Migrante, Tecun Uman.)



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.