

M A R C H 2 0 1 8



In this issue: Read more from last summer's delegations to San Marcos. Stay tuned for reports soon on the upcoming March delegation's visit!

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!

From March 10 – 19, a delegation from Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton, will travel to San Marcos. Accompanying Global Solidarity Committee member Mary Jo Frohlich will be Fr. Jim Nash, pastor at Ss. Peter & Paul, and parishioners Diana Albrecht, Michael Brady, Sharon Spence, Ramon Gras, Martha Wheatley, and Sarah Flynn. Fr. Nash writes, "My hope first and foremost is to develop a deeper relationship with the Diocese of San Marcos as a whole and our sister parish Tres Reyes." Ss. Peter & Paul is working to build a school in San Marcos, and so much of the visit will focus on this, as well as the joy of meeting new friends.

Special Event, mark your calendars! On Sunday, April 22, our diocese will celebrate 15 years of solidarity with San Marcos. To celebrate this milestone, we will have a Mass and buffet dinner at Schaefer's Canal House. More information and ticket sales to follow.

Reflection from Sherrie Connolly, Ss. Peter & Paul, Easton (summer'17 delegation)

FAITH: Our brothers and sisters in Guatemala have an abundance of faith. They celebrate Mass as it should always be celebrated, as the most special and exciting part of our week. After all, we are spending time with Our Lord and Savior in a most amazing way! Their attitudes, visages, decorations, and music were clearly recognizable signs of this faith. However, the experience was much deeper than just what I could see or hear. It was, moreover, a feeling that touched my very soul every time I joined in our new family as we gathered for Mass together. There was a complete sense of being one with God and His people.

HOPE: On the evening of Day 3, we were reflecting on our experiences that day. It was the day when I had been able to spend the morning at the school with Elva, Sharon, and the children. I was asked how I felt to be in the school, which was, admittedly, in very poor condition and, as such, was vastly different in physical demeanor from my own SSPP. Yet, I did not notice the physical condition so much once I was there for a minute or two. It was as if that did not even deserve my notice. I was full of joy and hope and a sense of immediately belonging to the excited community of learners, though I spoke Spanish very poorly. There was no judgment or laughing when I did not know how to say the word I wanted to say. The children were so hard-working and so eager to read and write and learn mathematics. Their surroundings did not cause them to despair. They were focused on the

positive. It is what I did not previously truly and deeply know but know now: material possessions and buildings are honestly fairly irrelevant. Learning can take place in so many circumstances, and it is the hopefulness with which we greet each day that largely determines its outcome.

LOVE: This one is the greatest, as you know. Why??? . . . because it is how we share in God's life with our community. It means we let God in and through us. It is His Breath all around us, encircling us, nudging us, prompting us, moving us, teaching us . . . God is Love! Love is something that our brothers and sisters in Guatemala know how to share very generously. When you first meet anyone, you know they care about you, they are glad to be with you, and you are truly welcome. Hugs, kisses, prayers, and often food or gifts are given to you as a new member of their community. It is genuine lasting love, not just a polite interaction.

There are no words to describe my experiences because there are so many feelings and thoughts that do not have words to adequately describe them. Therefore, I have to let it rest as it is . . . a reflection that can hardly do even one ounce of justice to my experience. But if words do not exist that allow me to share my experiences with those who did not walk where I walked, I have only one option: to invite you to go next time so you can understand.

Emma Field, UDel student (summer '17 delgation), shared photos and thoughts of the visit.

There are not enough words to describe my experience with the Diocese of Wilmington on our trip to the Diocese of San Marcos. It sounds cliché but it's true. Having a little sister adopted from Guatemala has allowed me to have an even closer bond with the people of Guatemala.

The first photo I share is of Keily, Dulce, Heidi, Melissa and I. These girls are all 6th grade students at La Escuela Santa Ana. For me, it was especially meaningful to meet students from La Escuela Santa Ana since I attended Saint Ann School in Wilmington and recall many years of raising funds for them through our annual fiesta. Not only did I get to meet 6th grade students but also students from all of the classes as well as

all of the teachers. From the students to the teachers, there was an aura of positivity throughout the school that is hard to describe. The school was truly thriving.



The second photo is of Ashley, a student at La Escuela San Louis. The school that Ashley attended had just 1 teacher that taught all of the grades. The teacher truly inspired me. Despite the circumstances, it was evident that she was making the absolute most of her situation and never giving up on her students, which I think is something we can all learn from.

The third photo I want to share is solely to showcase the true beauty of the country of Guatemala. The landscape of the country is breathtaking, especially in Lake Atitlan where this photo was taken. We visited this place on our last day and it was here where I was able to reflect on my experiences. In meeting those who lived within the Diocese of San Marcos, I was able to understand a whole different side of the world in a way I never thought possible. I was able to strengthen my faith and strengthen my sense of gratitude for the life I have been given.



Reflection by Miriam Sigler, chair of the T'micha (support) committee at Congregation Beth Israel of Media (summer '17 delegation).

Never again will I view breakfast the same way. I've been buying fair trade coffee for years, accepting the loopholes of the fair-trade label, because to not even attempt this would be worse. I also now understand why Hawaiian coffee is more expensive than Guatemalan coffee; the answer has nothing to do with quality.

After last week's visits to coffee plantations in Nueva Buena Vista, El Rodeo, and El Tumbador, I am more-than-ever intent to buy fair trade coffee. I couldn't comprehend the poverty of coffee "recogedores" until my visit to San Luis School in El Tumbador. Fifty bright-eyed children of coffee plantation workers ("recogedores") share a 2-room school with 1 teacher, dirt floors & no plumbing. Fr Matias told us their parents earn an average of \$4/day. The school in Sta. Ana is better, but there's no guarantee its promising kids will go past 6th grade; most know this is necessary for their futures.



Above: Students at Santa Ana pose with delegation members.

Everything is a matter of perspective. Though changing 500 years of feudalism is a slow, sometimes fatal process, there has been some progress. Health "promotoras" are successfully educating their communities to exercise birth spacing, get tested for HIV and diabetes, & report abuse & mental health concerns. To say I was impressed with the clinic in Catarina, run by Maryknoll Sisters Jane Buellesbach and & Marylou Daoust, is an understatement. They've dedicated 5 decades to the wellness of their community. I will add Fr Stanley Rother to that list of dedicated clergies; giving selflessly of himself during the civil war, he died a martyr in 1981

when he was assassinated in his own chapel.

I will also add Fathers Silverio and Delfino to that list of those who "walk the walk." Their days consist of traversing winding mountainous roads, serving parishes lacking full-time priests. They work hard with local authorities, improving working conditions, increasing public services & access to education, and supporting students like Rubi and Julio, with a computer, modem service and printer from the Archdiocese of Wilmington.

And I will add Adon and Celeste, lawyers at Casa del Migrante, who provide legal counsel to migrants on what is probably the riskiest journey of their lives. Located in Tecun Uman near the Mexican border, they are part of a selfless team, joined by social worker Carylys. Some migrants will stay and make a go of things in nearby Malacatán, but even there, promises of work often turn out to be trafficking of humans & drugs. And most especially, I honor Fr. Barilli of the Scalabrini order, dedicated to immigrant safety and dignity.

I mean no disrespect to the "champions" pictured on a box of Wheaties.

But my champions are the coffee cutters, banana pickers, and all the hard-working, proud and resilient "chapines and chapinas" I was blessed to meet on this trip. Every time I sip my "Joe" or peel a banana, I will hold these amazing humans in highest regard, and thank them for giving me sustenance to begin my day.



Above: Border crossing at Tecun Uman. Tighter crossings exist nearby.