

Guatemala at a Glance

Informe Christmas 2009 (year 2/ No. 5)

The posadas began in November and ended December 23rd. It is a Christmas celebration of the village as they gather and walk together to remember Mary and Joseph's search for shelter. It is a nightly event and different families offer hospitality to the immigrant couple. We are reminded of our mission statement which challenges us to **"have an attitude of hospitality which calls us to stretch the boundaries of our comfort."** And we pray that all of the searching, wounded and frightened strangers among us may find welcome in each of our corners of the world. May we be clothed with Christmas hearts throughout this new year.

Christmas time means good moments of coming together to celebrate all that has been and all that is. Margo Young, CPPS, was with us for a time and we celebrated the friendship and shared history we know as blessing. Therese Wetta, ASC, of our international leadership team, came in the name of our ASC congregation. We are grateful for the bonds which unite us and remind us that we walk in different lands but are all part of the one human community. The teachers gathered for a celebration, each one bringing a "used" gift, something with sentimental rather than monetary value. The sharing of why each one was offering their gift was truly touching. The members of the health project partied as well! In the midst of so much brokenness and hurting it is a way to proclaim life and be faithful to our mission of making **"concrete choices that reflect our charism and call forth hope and a deepening of the value of life."** The gift exchange reflected the current economic reality...each person made a card to offer support and gratitude for another, mindful of the giftedness of each and the contributions made to help "bring about the beautiful order."

We invited the two priests Bill and Abel to join us for snacks, sharing and hot buttered rum drinks! We each mentioned one moment of grace that most touched us in 2009. It was a simple invitation that sparked a truly profound exchange. Sometimes the simplest question can lead us to amazing places of connection. Christmas Eve there was a joyful liturgy followed by the traditional fireworks at midnight and then again at noon. We invited several folks to a Christmas feast...those who had no place to go and celebrate. We even invited a "bolo" (drunk) who stumbled in to midnight Mass to join us. He probably awoke on Christmas morning without remembering, but there was a place set at the table for him.

For sure, many of the same problems and pains continue to dominate the Guatemalan reality. But we wanted to share a bit the hope that lies within and beneath it all. We are here not just to endure the bleeding and brokenness but to actively participate in God's redeeming movements, to be about life and not death. And as the Irish proverb reminds us, "It is in the shelter of each other that the people live." Each of you by your caring and support of our presence here contributes to being shelter for us. We are grateful beyond telling and pray that you know such shelter in your own circle of friends. Merry Christmas and a blessed journey in 2010.

Kris and Dani