

Guatemala at a Glance
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Grace is not accidental...

During the course of our reflections this month, we asked ourselves the question - Why are we here... why are we, the Adorers of the Blood of Christ here in Guatemala? We began to answer this question by sharing what we each could recall about the history of the ASC connection in Guatemala. First with the sisters from the Wichita area who had joined Stan Rother in ministry in Santiago Atitlan and the sisters from the Ruma area who had spent time in El Progreso. And then, 22 years ago, joining in collaboration with the CPPS brothers, which over time brought together the ASC's from Ruma and Columbia and the CPPS sisters from Dayton. And here we are today in La Labor, where history speaks to us again...grace is not accidental.

Our reflection then led us to the question – With this history of connection what does it mean to be a voice for the voiceless? This question led us to take a look at some of the current facts and information on Guatemala...

- Since January of this year over 100 Guatemalans have been deported from the United States on a weekly basis
- Over the past several years the GNP has noted positive economic growth but this does not improve conditions for most Guatemalans as the gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen
- The WHO considers, as normal, 3 homicides for every 100,000 habitants whereas in Guatemala the level has reached 45 violent deaths for every 100,000 persons, double the rate during the 36 year armed conflict and in the metropolitan area the rate is 90 homicides, the highest in the world
- In ecological efforts and care of the environment, Guatemala has been ranked 105 out of 163 countries through the world and next to last on the list of the countries in Central America
- Ex-president Portillo is in jail awaiting the decision of his extradition to the US where he is to be tried for money laundering, one of many elected officials who use public funds for personal gain
- A “culture of violence” has become accepted as the norm and many have adopted a “stay inside” custom which has broken down neighbor relations and is changing the social fabric of Guatemala
- According to experts Guatemala has some of the best laws concerning nutritional rights and yet 49% of children under 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition
- Public security is threatened as the police force has over 5000 vacancies while there are 5 private security guards for every national police officer
- Unemployment and underemployment continues in double digits and being a public transportation driver has become the most dangerous job

Thinking about the current reality in which we find ourselves led us to reflect once again on the power of the spirituality of the Blood of Christ and our call to be a sign for life in the face of death, our call to stand alongside and be with in solidarity, our call to live a quality of presence that speaks of hope. Going deeper into our spirituality as reflected in this reality led us to then ask ourselves the question –

Why would we not be here? Grace is not accidental...

*May you know and experience the grace of Easter moments in your life,
Dani and Kris*