

Guatemala at a Glance

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We heard from a friend a few days ago who wondered if she was "off" our Informe list since she hadn't received any news in a while. What a great affirmation of the sharing we offer to you, usually, on a monthly basis. I tried to listen to that short email and allow it to move in me. It reminded me of a quote from Mark Nepo-- **"To listen is to continually give up all expectation and to give our attention, completely and freshly, to what is before us, not really knowing what we will hear or what that will mean. In the practice of our days, to listen is to lean in, softly, with a willingness to be changed by what we hear."**

So what are we hearing these days, in our shared lives, the reality of Guatemala and our connections with an international sisterhood. **April** was a time of real blessing. We began the month with celebrations of Holy Week and Easter. In our village and throughout the country processions abounded. And truly, one does **give up all expectation and give attention, completely and freshly, to what is before us...** a wonderful chaos that somehow reveals community and faith moving us out of ourselves. And so we did move as well. Kris was able to join other sisters of the congregation in Washington D.C. for a 3 day workshop with VIVAT, an international organization working with 8 Catholic religious communities and our efforts in behalf of justice, peace and the integrity of creation with special emphasis on advocacy at the U.N. We welcomed a group of medical personnel for a week of surgical attention to the communities of this area. It's always a great gift to be a part of this week, witnessing the willingness of the surgery team to "go with the flow" and improvise. Hand surgeons become foot surgeons, "orderlies" are the surgeons and nurses who carry patients from the surgery gurney to the lawn chairs which serve as the recovery area. That's what it means to **give attention, completely and freshly, to what is before us...**suffering humanity. Following the surgery week, both of us joined the sisters of our local community network in Arizona for 3 days of prayer, sharing, dreaming and experiencing mutual support. We were able to gain some first hand information about the impact Arizona's new anti-immigration law is having on long term immigrant residents and the great work of our sisters in Tucson.

The big national news was the Vice-President's proclamation that Guatemala is "hypocritical, lying and corrupt." He went on to relate Guatemala's social illness and violence are similar to an epidemic with all the corresponding characteristics. This was further borne out in UN special investigation concerning the fact that Guatemala now has the highest mother-infant mortality rate, chronic malnutrition and a huge lack of necessary medicines and medical personnel. Perhaps the lying relates directly to the President stating publicly that so far in 2010 there have been no deaths of mothers during or after labor! **To give our attention, completely and freshly, to what is before us...**certainly a challenge personally, as communities and, hopefully, our political leadership. The last item of news was in the newspaper today, headline of page 1. "Impunity (no legal consequences for crimes committed) rules the day." The statistics for 2010 show that of the 400,000 registered complaints and accusations, only 0.4% have resulted in prosecution. Case in point: yesterday at the neighboring village soccer field, an armed group opened fire on some students playing there. The police chased them to another community of our parish where there was another great shoot out. Today in the paper, there was nothing reported.

And finally, ending with the good news of **May**, when Mothers are celebrated with a national holiday; the teachers celebrated Kris, accompanied by Dani, with a taco fest; our connections with our sisters of the US Region were strengthened even more as we welcomed Spanish students from our Newman University in Wichita. A wonderful experience of **leaning in, softly, with a willingness to be changed by what we hear,**" as students lived with families for a week and offered service in both of our projects, and were profoundly touched and touched many here as well.

So we pray grace on each of us and all of us as we continue to listen to this reality, to the dreams and cry of the Guatemalan people, to the hopes and longings of our religious community, especially as we prepare for our national gathering in June and our international gathering to be held in India in 2011. We thank the Missionaries of the Precious Blood who recently published an article we wrote for the Cup of the New Covenant. And we especially thank you, sisters, friends, family, for your interest and your care. May we all find ourselves **leaning in, softly**, wherever we walk, **with a willingness to be changed by what we hear.** *Kris and Dani*

As we get ready to send this off, the volcano Pacaya is erupting. (30 miles to the south) Already there is over an inch of black, gritty ash on the ground here and it continues to fall. Of course the airport is now closed and several villages at the foot of the volcano are being evacuated. Please keep folks in your prayers.