

## Guatemala at a Glance

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“We hear the call...which moves us to stand with...impels us to be of service...invites walking in solidarity.”  
*ASC Guatemala Mission Statement*

May...a month filled with many and varied events, activities and possibilities and the thread that we found woven through it all has been accompaniment. Being aware, standing with, listening intently, sitting by, sharing moments, choosing consciously, walking beside, accompanying another...the thread that has given the fabric of our lives this month rich texture, deep color and profound form.

On the personal and local La Labor level...

- May 1<sup>st</sup> was celebrated as day of the worker and with that the workers began construction of the retaining wall in front of the church and clinic in La Laguneta. This is the first phase of the health care project's building project and, as all things go, the day construction began, the rainy season also began.
- Celebrations abounded in May as we rejoiced in the gift of Kris and her life of 60 years. Parties and flowers and laughter and blessings brightened the day as we proclaimed: life is so good, and we are so happy to share in it together.
- Welcoming and walking with groups who come to share hearts and hands in Guatemala was also part of May as a group from Calumet College visited the parish and a group from Newman University participated with us in the diverse activities of the health care and education projects. This included a moving experience when an indigenous religious, Sister Felisa, who came and shared with us about her life and ministry with Fr. Stan Rother during the last year of his life until his assassination. We were profoundly touched by her story and felt very much the presence of Stan in our circle that evening.
- We both had the opportunity to go the states this month, Kris accompanying her dear friend Anastasia during her radiation treatments, which included runs through the Taco Bell drive-in on the way back to Ruma, nourishing the body and the spirit towards healing and goodness and Dani spending time reflecting and being with the sisters in Columbia as part of the process of giving gratitude for what has been and celebrating the new life that is to come. We knew profound blessing as back in Guatemala we shared together, forming a deep and communal connectedness through our different experiences.

On the national Guatemalan level...

- The country has been thrown into a major crisis since May 10<sup>th</sup> when a prominent lawyer was shot and killed while riding his bike Sunday morning around the wealthy residential area where he lived. The next day a video was distributed that he had made several days earlier stating that if this video is shown it is because he has been killed. In the video he accused the president, Alvaro Colom, the first lady, the presidential secretary and a businessman as being responsible for his death. Many different and contrasting theories abound which have motivated different groups to massively protest, both in support of the president, as well as calling for his resignation. A common ground has been the call for an impartial and honest investigation with justice being served...a very difficult undertaking in a country where impunity has infiltrated and controls at all levels. The UN-backed commission against corruption and impunity in Guatemala has been chartered with the task of investigation, and we continue to follow closely the information and actions that are coming forth.
- Over this past month there has been a strong civil awakening in many different sectors as Guatemalans are standing up and saying enough to the violence, the corruption, the lies, etc. that have infiltrated the very lifeblood of the country and society. We reflect on this as the call of the blood again moves us to “bring about that beautiful order of things.”

As we all continue to share in this journey, may the grace of God be with each of us in the place and space of our accompaniment. Blessings and un abrazo fuerte [a big hug],  
Dani and Kris