

August 2020

Dear parishioners of St. Thomas More Parish,

Thank you so much for your continued support of the Guatemala Mission. It is wonderful that many of you show your support of the mission through your participation in the Family to Family program. The Guatemala Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane works together with Family to Family to enhance the lives of the impoverished people of the highlands of Guatemala.

The Guatemala Commission has decided to **cancel the 8th Annual Guatemala Mission Celebration, which was scheduled for September 16th**. We are hoping to hold this event in the spring. We will keep you updated when we are able to reschedule the Annual Celebration. Of course, Fr. Esequel is not able to travel here due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He sent these words expressing the situation in Guatemala and his prayers for all.

These days have been difficult here in Guatemala. People very close to me have died from COVID. A brother of mine who works as a doctor in one of the hospitals has tested positive but thank God he has recovered and has returned to the hospital again to continue helping. A cordial greeting to all the people who are supporting us with prayers and generosity. I pray and offer the Eucharist for everyone. Blessings from Father Esequel Xicay

The quilt raffle is also postponed until the next Annual Celebration. Sale of quilt raffle tickets will resume once churches are open to more people. Tickets already sold will be kept until the raffle is held.

Dr. Jose Miguel reported, in late June, that the medical clinics are busy with patients needing medical attention. He said, "People are afraid to go to Government hospitals and health centers because their staff are infected with COVID-19; there is more risk." He also said that people do not have money to pay for the medicines they need, and that they (the medical clinic staff) cannot deny them the medicine and medical attention, even if they cannot pay. In addition, Dr. Jose Miguel has spent more than \$2,000 for additional protective equipment.

On July 26th, Dr. Jose Miguel stated that the situation in Guatemala was getting worse every day with more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases each day bringing Guatemala's total to more than 45,000 with 1,800 deaths, including a number of cases in Nahualá, Ixtahuacán and Santa Lucía Utatlán. The epidemiologist forecasted that in the next weeks cases would increase in the rural area. "We ask God that this doesn't happen. Thank you to the good people who are willing to help us," concluded Dr. Jose Miguel.

For more information about the mission, please refer to the Guatemala Commission mission website:

<https://www.dioceseofspokane.org/diocese-of-solola>.

Again, thank you for your continued generosity through Family to Family donations in this time of special need. Please continue to pray for the people of the mission. They often tell us how grateful they are to God and to the people who support them; and they send their prayers for us.

Sincerely,

Donna Connell, Chairperson

Guatemala Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Spokane

