



505 W St. Thomas More Way
Spokane, WA 99208

Family to Family

Familia-A-Familia Newsletter

December 2010

Christmas 2010

Thanksgiving & Blessings

As we complete another year, we give thanks to God for you, our sponsors, and all the volunteers and dedicated people who give so generously of their time, talent, and treasure to help the poor whom we serve in Guatemala. We are especially grateful to Terry Coombes who managed our accounts for the past few years. And we're overjoyed that Arleen Shrader has again been willing to take on this challenge. Billing, banking, and keeping records of hundreds of individual accounts is a immense task --- especially when there is no pay involved!

We are also blessed to have such committed people as Natalia, Adela, and our other staff in Guatemala. Adela is currently under treatment for removal of a breast tumor. Please keep her, and all our staff, in your prayers.

Good News ---- Bad News

Two devout men were team members on a church-sponsored baseball team. Tom died and went to heaven. Bill continued his active life, but he was very curious about Tom's fate.

One night Bill had a dream wherein he was talking to Tom. "Yes," Tom said. "I made it! And I have some good news --- and bad news for you. You know how I love baseball. Well, the good news is I'll be playing in a baseball game here tomorrow. The bad news is, you're scheduled to pitch."

We have some "good and bad" news about the FTF program. The good news is that the desperately poor families we help in Guatemala will be getting a little more support in the way of food, housing, medical care, and training classes to help them on their road to self-sufficiency. Starting January 1st, their support will be increasing to \$40/month. Yes, after 24 years --- and considerable inflation --- our FTF sponsorship amount is changing from \$30/mo to \$40/mo.

The bad news is that someone has to pay more, and it is us! Many sponsors already help their families with extra monthly amounts on an individual basis. However, the change to \$40/mo will be an across the board adjustment. Having all sponsored families receive the same amount will also simplify recordkeeping for Adela and facilitate other economies in our FTF operations in Guatemala.

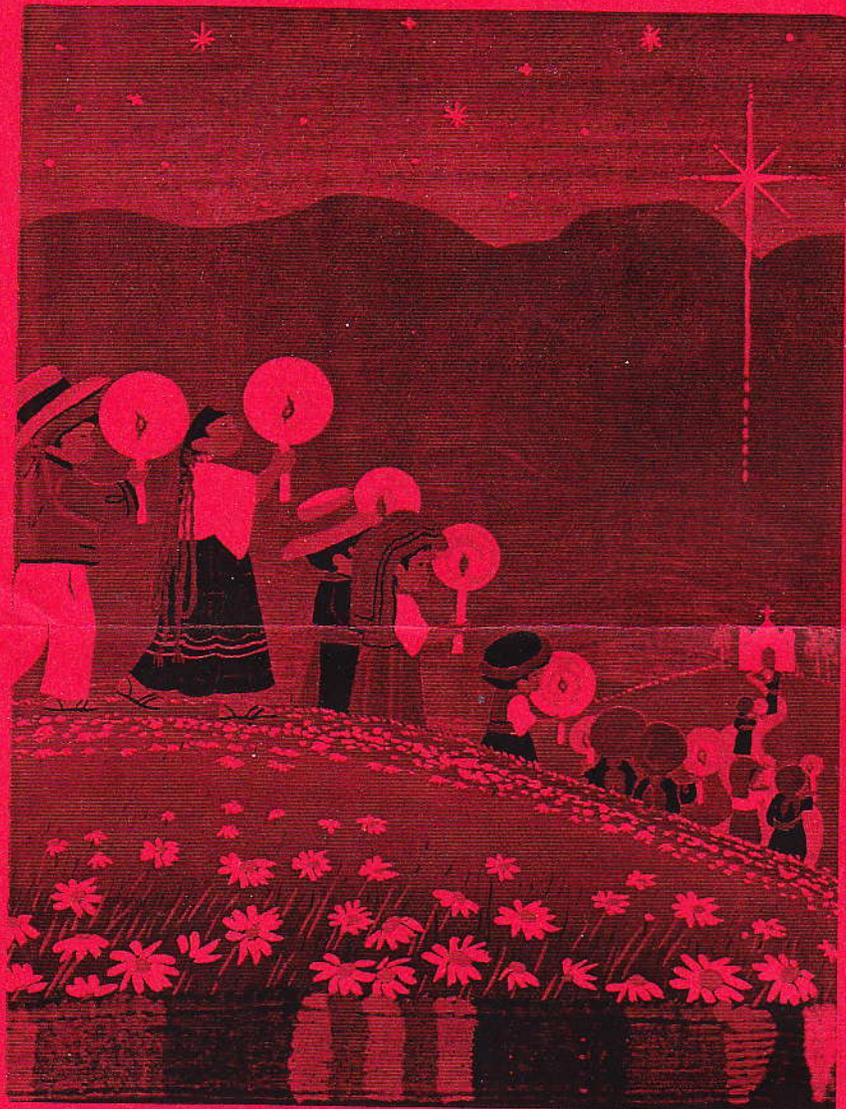
We realize that a \$10/mo increase may pose a hardship for some sponsors. If that is the case, *please continue with your \$30/mo amount.* Your continued support is important, and we will manage the shortage. If you plan to continue at \$30/mo, however, please note that on your statement so that Arleen will not show you as behind on your payments. As we all know from the widows mite story in the bible, a sacrificial \$30 donation for some might be more of a gift than a \$40 check for others. But we can all benefit from the joy of helping the poor.

A few sponsors already give more than \$40/mo and some also make unrestricted donations. These two sources may be used to help make up the \$10 differences. If contributed amounts in excess of \$40/mo are not needed to offset any shortage, they will be available to assist any needy family, such as ones in need of food, medicine, or improvements on their houses

Agatha & Summer Rains

The continuing rains following Tropical Storm Agatha have caused huge mud slides, ruined crops, and washed out roads, bridges, and many homes. Near Adela's village, 26 people died from landslides. Some were risking their lives trying to dig out others who had been buried in cars along the Pan American Highway, as more slides came and buried them.

Bishop Gonzalo de Villa of Solola, has been quoted in both Guatemalan and U.S. papers on the devastation that has occurred. He referred to the Samaritans of the Summit, saying "I would like to ... remember, with hope and gratitude, these men and boys, indigenous Quiches, Catholic Christians, that were selfless, risking their own lives to save others that they did not know."



Parishioners from St. Joseph Parish, Colbert, who recently returned from a visit to Ixtahuacan have confirmed that the mud slide damage in Ixtahuacan is extensive and continuing. The seating area and altar of the church of Santa Catarina are separating and the floor has dropped about 18 inches. Fr. Baronti has observed that the local people consider the building unsafe to use.

There are also cracks in the outside wall and the floor of the nearby FTF training center. We do know the extent of harm to the adjacent bakery, but Dave Dodroe, who managed the construction, is returning to Guatemala on Dec. 1st and will be assessing the damage and initiating plans for repair.

Medicines, Clothes, & Food Help Reaching Victims

Thanks to extra donations from more than two dozen FTF sponsors, plus other Spokane Diocese support, help is reaching many of the impoverished families in the Highlands. In addition to an earlier transfer of \$5,000 for food, FTF will be making three additional transfers of \$4,000 each to purchase corn over the next 6 months. Adela will be managing the food distribution.

FTF is also assisting with medicines and children's clothes and shoes. A mid-November shipment of medicines has been (temporarily) held up in Guatemalan Customs. However, another shipment that includes a donation of \$500 in medicines from Providence in Everett, WA is currently in process.