



Volume 15, Issue 2

Lent 2015

As you have given, so shall you receive. —Luke 6:38

Dear Friends,

I am in the U.S.A. the Land of Plenty and it is Lent. We have so much here. Material blessings overflow. Our closets and drawers bulge, food wastes in the refrigerator; we are trying to lose weight.

The remedy? Almsgiving.

Almsgiving by definition is the practice of giving money or food to the poor. For the Christian this is not an option. We are reminded of this especially during Lent.

Poverty has many faces. Not only is it a lack of food, shelter and clothing but can also be a lack of self-worth, time, and community; things more subtle, not so evident.

I believe we are here to walk with each other in our poverty whatever form that takes.

We need to give the alms of money. But it's harder sometimes to do the long listening, discernment, heart-wrenching work of walking with the materially poor in the giving. And harder sometimes to take time to visit the sick relative in the hospital or the elder forgotten in the nursing home who suffer emotional and physical poverty in heart and body.

Fr. Robert Barrington shares in his book *Lent Reflections* on Day One – “When a man asked the English Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins what he must do in order to believe, Hopkins replied, “Give alms.”

Not only does almsgiving help the poor – it helps us.

Pope Francis in Meditation of the Day from *Magnificat* March 2015 says, “Whenever material things, money, worldliness, become the center of our lives, they take hold of us, they possess us; we lose our



very identity as human beings... when everything ends up being about “me” and my own comfort; life, the world, other people, all of these no longer matter, everything boils down to one thing: having... and we become empty.”

I am privileged to walk between the United States and Guatemala as a bridge of giving and receiving. You are a vital part of this bridge.

Throughout the year we have walked with and helped the materially poor in the Ixcán, Guatemala in simple but effective ways that have made a difference. Things like food, health care, education, empowerment/dignity and prayer.

We thank you.

May God bless you in the giving and in the receiving. May this Lenten Season be a means of moving us ever so surely toward Resurrection.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



Mission Update: Javier Gonzalez in Santiago Ixcán is overseeing our ongoing outreach ministry to the poor and scholarship program.

Reverse mission in the U.S. with Kathy has been fruitful with new writing projects, a Board of Director retreat, Ixcán Creations microbusiness development, and connecting with our benefactors. Please see new **BLOG – Reflections from the East Window** on our website: www.ixcanministries.org.

Kathy will return to Guatemala on March 16th.



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Ixcán Ministries provides a prayerful, pastoral presence through lay missionaries living in solidarity with the poor of the remote Ixcán jungle of Guatemala to learn from as well as to assist both spiritually and materially the people with whom life and ministry are shared. The organization strives to be a bridge between two cultures and nations allowing for the exchange of varying gifts between the rich and poor for the ultimate purpose of empowerment and transformation of lives and society.

Ixcán Ministries is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your contributions are tax deductible. You may contact us at:

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