

Dear Friends,

At this writing it is still the season of Advent. The fires of the lit candles around the Advent wreath warm heart and soul in this time of preparation and reflection waiting for His coming. This waiting wasn't easy for the Holy family that first Christmas as they journeyed on foot and donkey to the little town of Bethlehem looking for a place to give birth.

I am thinking of home now, the importance of it, the searching for it as I write from my mother's home in North Dakota. Home – a place of warmth, security, grounding. Mary, Joseph and Jesus searched for such a place, knocked on doors and found “no room” at the inn; until at long last, a home in the humblest of places; a stable was discovered where Jesus was born.

Right before I left Guatemala, a humble man, a poor simple farmer, came to the blue door of the mission house. His name is Candido and he said, “I heard that you help people in need. I'm wondering if you could help my family and me?”

Candido and his wife Lidia, both in their thirties of K'anjobal Maya ethnicity moved to Santiago Ixcán about a year and a half ago with their five children ages ranging from twelve to one year. They came to the Ixcán jungle from the far away province of Huehuetenango in the western part of Guatemala looking for work in the cardamom and corn fields of our lush rainforest. Landless, with no permanent place to live in the village, Candido and Lidia were forced to move from house to house with their children and few possessions four times since arriving. Their most recent home is a small dwelling with a dirt floor and roof made of *posh* – palm like leaves.



Candido's face etched with signs of fatigue and worry. “Could you help me build a house for my family?” he asked.

Providentially, a few days before, I had just designed a simple house plan with a local contractor-builder and was waiting for God to bring the right person to us to receive our one-house-a-year project.

Candido and his family were perfect candidates for our project but there was a problem... “Where will we build this house for you?” I asked. Candido shrugged his shoulders. “Find someone in the community who will allow you to build on their property and be there for at least ten years and then we'll talk again,” I informed him.

“I will!” he said, a look of hope in his eyes. He left my house with a mission and I unexpectedly left the country the next day due to a family emergency.

Later, Javier Gonzalez, our on-site outreach administrator, informed me that Candido did find an understanding landowner, a local teacher, who agreed to allow a house to be built on a piece of land he owns in the village limits with water access, near a main road and not far from schools.

The house will be the property of Ixcán Ministries for use by Candido and his family according to the terms agreed upon by the landowner and us. Candido will do one day of service/month for one year as a way to give back to the ministry.

Candido is enthusiastic and will be very involved with the construction of his house from start to finish. Presently, he is working to level the land for construction and he told me by telephone that the foundational beams have been hewn from a tree nearby and are at the housing site.

Candido is happy to be in his new community where he can work and his children can study. The education of his children is very important to him. "I want my children to study," he emphasized in one of our conversations. "For this reason, I want to live in Santiago Ixcán for a long time."

"How will this home make a difference in your life?" I asked him. "We will be in one place that allows for more peace and security. We can raise animals and my children can study."

Candido truly is a St. Joseph, who sought shelter for his family. The house will be simple, stable-like, but will provide a roof over their heads and a place to build a fire out of the elements to warm and cook. Home. And for now – theirs.

Thank you for your generous support of Ixcán Ministries throughout 2016! We are deeply grateful and remember you in our prayers.

Sincerely,



The Board of Directors, Kathy and the people of Santiago Ixcán wish you and yours a most Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year filled with God's grace!



Mission Note: It is with heavy hearts we share with you that Kathy's mother, Joell, died on November 5th, 2016. Kathy is in the United States for an extended time to do reverse mission activities and to focus on her writing project. She will continue to administrate the mission working with our on-site-administrator, Javier Gonzalez, who oversees the outreach ministry and with the leadership committees of the scholarship program, Ixcán Creations women's project, and the library.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Ixcán Ministries is a Christian lay mission serving as a ministry of presence with the Mayan people in the Ixcán jungle of Guatemala. We act as a bridge between cultures for the exchange of gifts to transform lives and society.

Ixcán Ministries is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

Contact us or send a donation to:
Ixcán Ministries
PO Box 51
Mandan, ND 58554

www.ixcanministries.org
ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com
Marlane Peterson, President
(701) 426-9276

Purchase Ixcán Creations products at:
Tienda Marleny
(please call 701-426-9276 to shop)