



Reflection Journal

2009 Guatemala Medical Mission



Journal Questions

What is your personal prayer or wish for the people of Guatemala?

Participants in CHW's Foundation for International Health are encouraged to use their mission experience as an opportunity for personal transformation. This invitation is based on four precepts put forth by the theologian Bernard Lonergan:

Attentiveness Let your heart and mind see the life that is present to you today.

Reflection Take the time to reflect on your experience, explore which images remain with you.

Discernment Ask yourself, "What does this experience mean for me? What am I to learn?"

Responsibility How will you respond to this experience? How will you bring it back to your daily life?

How has your service here been a testament to your personal faith or your personal sense of purpose?

What teachings have your moments of silence brought you?

How has your service here contributed to your understanding of peace?

October 23rd: Departing

The Fruit of Prayer

The fruit of silence is prayer
the fruit of prayer is faith
the fruit of faith is love
the fruit of love is service
the fruit of service is peace.

-- Mother Teresa

Journaling

Journal writing will be an interpretation of your unique experience on this mission. This document is provided for your use only. Write what you see, feel and experience each day as you engage in this journey. Doing so will enrich your experience and will be a testament to your time in Guatemala. The reflection questions are offered as a guide, but feel free to write what your experience brings you.

After you have had some time and distance from your mission experience, you are invited to reflect on and recognize how you have been transformed. You might also consider how you will translate the experience -- how you will make it manifest in your life.

October 16th: Journeying

Journal Questions

Working Together

We shape our selves to fit this world
and by the world are shaped again.

The visible and the invisible
working together in common cause,
to produce the miraculous.

I am thinking of the way the intangible air
passed at speed round a shaped wing
easily holds our weight.

So may we, in this life trust
to those elements we have yet to see

or imagine, and look for the true
shape of our own self, by forming it well
to the great intangibles about us.

- David Whyte

What have you discovered about the needs of the residents of the Esquipulas area? What do they REALLY need?

What question(s) will you hold in your heart as you prepare to return to the U.S.?

What practical, concrete action will you take when you get home?

October 22nd: Serving

Journal Questions

There is a monk in the mountains who will never give you advice, but only a question. I was told his questions could be very helpful. I sought him out.

“I am a parish priest,” I said. “I’m here on retreat. Could you give me a question?”

“Ah, yes,” he answered. “My question is, ‘What do they need?’”

I came away disappointed. I spent a few hours with the question, writing out answers, but finally I went back to him.

“Excuse me. Perhaps I didn’t make myself clear. Your question has been helpful, but I wasn’t so much interested in thinking about my apostolate during this retreat. Rather, I wanted to think seriously about my own spiritual life. Could you give me a question for my own spiritual life?”

“Ah, I see. Then, my question is, ‘What do they REALLY need?’”

-- Father Theophane

What is your personal goal for this experience?

What experiences can you draw upon in which working together can produce the miraculous?

What are some of the “great intangibles” you’ve noticed supporting us as we traveled together?

October 17th: Arrival

Journal Questions

What have you noticed about the “burden of charity” your body and spirit have carried as you serve here?

This Place Where You Are Right Now (excerpt)

This place where you are right now
God circled on a map for you.

Wherever your eyes and arms and heart
Can move against the earth and sky,
The Beloved has bowed there –

Our Beloved has bowed there knowing
You were coming.

- Hafiz

What has the experience of today taught you about the poor?

Do you agree with St. Vincent de Paul that we need their forgiveness?

October 21st: Serving

Journal Questions

You will find that charity
is a heavy burden to carry.

It is only because of your love
- only your love -

That the poor will forgive you
the bread you have given.

-- St. Vincent de Paul

What are a few of the things/people/images that stand out for you about Esquipulas?

What was the best moment for you today?

What was the most challenging moment?

What other thoughts and feelings do you have about arriving in Esquipulas and meeting our hosts?

October 18th. Serving

Journal Questions

To Have Hope (excerpt)

To have hope
Is to believe that history continues to open
To the dream of God and to human creativity.

To have hope
Is to continue affirming
That it is possible to dream a different world,
Without hunger, without injustice,
Without discrimination.

To have hope
Is to be a courier of God.

-- Missionary Sisters of
St. Charles Borromeo, Honduras

What have you noticed about the sufferings and distress of the poor in the villages we've served? How is it similar to the experience of your own "lot in life?"

Do you agree that the sins of the world can be read on the faces of the poor? Why or why not?

What other thoughts and feelings do you have about today?

October 20th: Serving

Journal Questions

Now that you have been here for a few days, what is your hope for the communities you've served?

In the visibility of his sufferings and distress the poor person is what each human being is in the privacy of his or her own lot in life...

The sins of the world can be read in the faces of the poor.

The poor have their independence restricted, they must ask for things, they must wait, and above all they must suffer inconveniences.

-- Pope John Paul II

What sustains your hope in times of trial?

Where did you see hope in the villages you visited today?

October 19th: Serving

Journal Questions

How have difficulties in life shaped your experience and your ability to make a difference in the world?

A Franciscan Benediction

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears
for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and turn their pain to joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness,
to believe that you can make a difference in this world
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

What has caused you discomfort today? What has that discomfort taught you?

After today, what do you believe we can accomplish, that others may say is impossible?