

Sister Parish Guatemala Representatives Meeting

February 22-23, 2014



This year's representatives meeting opened on a cool and sunny Saturday morning. The wind swooned through the Sister Parish Center as representatives from each community gathered for the first time this calendar year. The meeting's educational topic, "Migration," outlined the reasons people immigrate/migrate and the root causes. Guatemala's *Directiva* (advisory board) is also managing the absence of former President Juan due to health issues. Representatives called Juan over speaker phone to give him words of encouragement and sung "We Give Thanks, Lord" and "B'antiox". The representatives also spoke of ways they could support the Sister Parish families that are dealing with the recent loss of family members.

Guatemala Directiva 2013-2015

President	*Dina (UPAVIM)
Vice President	Ricardo (Las Margaritas II)
Secretary	Eluvia (Tierra Nueva II)
Treasurer	Esmirna (UPAVIM)
Member at Large 1	Tomas (Chontalá)

*Juan is not able to fulfill his duties due to health reasons. Dina has replaced him in this role.

Attendance

Sepalau:	Absent
Las Margaritas II:	Ricardo and Rodrigo
Tierra Nueva II:	Eluvia and Clementina
Tierra Nueva I:	Cynthia, Berta, and Cesar
Chichipate:	Pedro and Enrique
Chontalá:	Tomas, Irma and Tomasa
UPAVIM:	Dina and Estela
San Andrés Itzapa:	Otto and Basilia
San Antonio Cunén:	Absent
Sister Parish Staff:	Carrie (Executive Director) Brian (Guatemala Regional Coordinator)



Sister Parish Events

Documentary *Generations in Solidarity*

Representatives watched a rough draft of the Sister Parish documentary and gave feedback. The documentary was released in February in the United States. [You can order a copy and/or schedule a screening in your area.](#) Representatives commented after watching the video, "We talk about the difficult situations that affect us, but also the joys of our experiences with new brothers and sisters and of knowing that so far away, you make an effort to share the history of Sister Parish and build....solidarity, seeking peace in the world and sharing the Bible," and "Surrounded by sadness, we continue to move forward – we have to have moments of joy as well." Representatives expressed their thanks to the filmmakers for their time, energy and dedication.

Solidarity Walk and Sister Parish Plans for 2014

Representatives enjoyed looking at photos and video from the November 2013 Solidarity Walk in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Representatives were also reminded of the 2014 Guatemala Solidarity Walk, scheduled for September 20. Sister Parish staff will post information on [2014 Solidarity Walk themes and plans for the U.S.](#) soon and you can also [connect with other Sister Parish activities in 2014.](#)

Educational Topic: Immigration and Migration

Presented by Ely Lopez Huinil

Why do people immigrate or migrate? What are their specific reasons? The speaker opened the conversation by questioning the representatives in order to identify the root causes of immigration/migration. Participants' responses included economic gain, violence, improved education, and a better life in general. The speaker then added that there are many reasons individuals and groups move and in order to resolve any determining factors it is important to address the root causes. In the context of Guatemala, one root cause for immigration/migration is land (the lack of land or conflict around ownership). The speaker gave the specific example of Cajola, a municipality of Quetzaltenango, where many residents have migrated to other parts of Guatemala or the United States. The movement of residents has had positive and negative effects on the community of Cajola, as well as the tangent communities created by the dispersing of the original Cajola population. Some negative effects immigration has had on the Cajola population are the lack of incentive for those who stay behind to continue working and/or finish their education. The most obvious positive effect on people affected is material gain. The community association in Cajola works with youth and adults in the community to provide practical solutions and alternatives, such as carpentry classes, support in the making and selling of crafts, and early childhood education.

Guatemala *Directiva* Meeting

During the meeting, the Guatemala *Directiva*:

- Reviewed project write-ups.
- Discussed ways to support Sister Parish families that are dealing with tragedy.
- Talked about each linkage and ways to help in strengthening the linkages.
- Shared ideas to improve communication with the northern Board of Directors.



Notes for Upcoming Events

- The next representatives meeting will take place September 20-21, 2014. Communities will bring Q30 to support expenditures.
- Cooks for next meeting: Chontalá and Chichipate
- Educational topic: Self-Esteem Workshop or Arts and Crafts Workshop