

*Disclaimer: As I reminded you again and again.. I don't know how to briefly say something.. I can't summarize... in a nutshell... I can only make a short story long...*

Ashraf and Freda, your reflections were beautiful and coming from the depth of the heart, reaching into the innermost parts of our hearts as well.

Freda, I was in a different situation than yours, returning to Mexico for the third time, I felt deprived of the privilege of the awe of the first view of the church nestled between the mountains.. the first encounter with the love of the people there, the feelings of holy fear that comes with the your very first mission.. I am not talking here about experience I gained because I went there before, as I have none of this, but I am referring to a sense of normalcy that at times can take away from the spiritual enrichment you may receive.. and I was so afraid of that..

So, to continue with my confessions, the first two days were like a quite enjoyment for returning to this beloved familiar place, and for meeting those precious friends again, I was also enormously enjoying being with this uniquely amazing group... a group of 22 persons that manifested the verses we started with on our first morning in Tlayacapan : ***“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”***

How was it possible for such a large group (the largest so far), with different personalities, backgrounds, ages, etc), and on top of that with only two showers (joking) to experience such a peaceful harmony and fellowship at every moment of the 7 days we spent together and continues after our return to normal life... this continues to amaze me... this is a reflection of the genuine blessings we have in being members in the one body of Christ.

Then came that day when we went on our daily walks to invite the people to the service, and Diego was in our little group, and God directed a casual conversation about Pigs being slaughtered in Nawat weddings as a gift from the groom, towards a different direction that led to us discovering that he has been reading and memorizing the stories of bible he was given on the previous mission (Diego is a Nawat Native who didn't go to church before), and that he told his younger brothers and sister the stories he read, however, no one else was allowed to touch his precious Bible!!!! What an amazing transformation that happened through the loving fingers of God, turning those pages for him, enriching his spirit with the stories of David, Daniel, and his most favorite story “Noah's ark”. When asked about the most important person in life, Diego simply said (Jesu Khristo)... On that evening, Diego was the one who delivered the Sunday School Lesson to the other kids.... Glory be to God... (let's pray for him and his family for more)

The next moment of encountering Jesus Christ, was when the aging Marathon Running Lady (she is over 80 years old), came to the church to seek the help of our great doctors. After her visit with them, and after requesting vitamins for her eyes, pain killers, etc.. God opened my eyes to a more important need she had... some of us might have felt that those poor people merely came for the medical service and the free medications, but as I walked her to the gate of the church, and when I stopped to give her a simple hug, she wouldn't let go... there was a thirst for this embrace, that (in my heart), I felt was more essential than the free medication... she probably was old and abandoned in a way, and this simple gesture of love was very fulfilling for her. The next day when she returned for a follow-up and I saw her, she graciously received my hugs with Joy and love, and I felt I was the unworthily, Hugging my Lord Jesus Christ when I saw the tears in her eyes.

I thought I had three moments to share, but now I am not sure which of the 27 I have should be number three ☺ (smiley face) ... is it the time we spent in front of the kitchen mingling with our Mexican brothers and sisters after the Holy Liturgy on Sunday, singing the Spanish hymns with them with heartily joy while Norma's Husband played on his guitar... and we all felt that in Christ no language barrier can exist... is it the (out of this world) journey to the Mountain on Wednesday with Patty? (Abouna Dawood, it was the Holy spirit that spoke on your tongue when you suggested we make this our spiritual journey to seek God on the mountain).. Is it the miracle of having Mina with us, skipping on his two crutches to the top of the mountain, and limping down on this narrow rocky route crossing an obstacle after the other, and giving us his crutches for picture taking without him having a trip or a fall... I told you Mina, you were carried on the wings of the angels.. or was it the voice of God speaking to me through the cold droplets of water that soaked into my hair sitting under the rock on the mountain between Maria and Monika because I told him I was so empty and needed to feel his presence, then softly speaking to my heart through Maria and Monica who started distantly humming the words of a song I haven't heard before, but I recognized the verses saying "I called you on top of the mountain and you heard me" and this was after I told him.. I need to hear your voice.. what was amazing is that Monika more than once, on our prayer meetings, asked God to use us as his tongue, hands, and feet, and he listened and used her to speak to my heart (and this taught me that we sometimes seek to serve the outsiders, but while loving God we may end up serving our nearest sister or brother, and Maria and Monica did reach out to me).

Now I think I am down to 15, and more precious moments are crowding into my heart... I know you love me but I can't take advantage of this love or risk losing it by expecting you to read my 200 page reflections, so I'll stop now and make it short and sweet ( ☺ ) ... (some of you received my smiley faces as the letter (J), so just to let you know this previous one between the brackets was a smiley face.

To summarize the above, I went with almost no new expectations, and God didn't stop showing his love and sweet surprises which I don't deserve.. Our God is an awesome God and we just need to listen..

Please keep praying for the people we served and were served by, because I now know for sure that God works after we are gone, and until we return to prepare a table of joy for us, and to let us marvel at the works of his hands.

Thank you Uncle Victor for your love and service, though remotely done, thanks Abouna Dawood for the privilege of FULLY having you and your family with us with undivided attention 24/7, thanks Abouna Zakarya for opening your heart, and your church to us again and again, with a smile and true love, thanks group for a memorable journey and unforgettable lessons.

In Christ  
Suzy