



Volume 19, Issue 4

August 2019

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

Dear Friends,

In the past, I often wondered how my friends in the Ixcán could have survived so many hardships and surmounted incredible obstacles without some of the resources that we take for granted here in the US; resources like: professional counseling, spiritual direction, area social services, 9-1-1 emergency assistance, abused adult centers, support groups, quality health care professionals and facilities, food pantries, etc. Through the years, they have told me how they did it and still do it; like what Francisca Ordonez shared a few months ago.

Forty-five-year-old, Francisca, recently joined our luchadora (fighter) women's group. The six women in the group have some things in common - they've been abandoned by the fathers of their children, they are very poor, and they fight to survive. Every two weeks, they meet in the mission house; to listen, to pray, and to support each other. (Ixcán Ministries provides them with basic necessities: corn, wood for cooking, emergency medical care, in exchange for some service they will do for others.) In the meeting, the women are invited to share something about their lives. Attending the group for the first time, Francisca shared this story...

In 2001, Francisca was living in the highlands of Huehuetenango with her husband and their four children: seven-year-old, Andres; five-year old, Juana; two-year-old Marcos; and a second trimester unborn baby, Natividad.

Four fateful years earlier, Francisca had been severely injured in a bus accident that crushed her left foot and leg below the knee. After a month in the hospital, she hobbled home with a cane; and would be plagued by the scarred wounds for the rest of her life, that hindered her ability to walk and work without pain.

Her husband, without her knowledge, was tired of her disability. One day he said, "I am going to the United States!" On the pretext that he was going to buy Andres and Juana some new clothes before he left the country, he took them and left. He wanted to take Marcos too, but Francisca refused. "I didn't want to be left home alone," she explained.

The day passed and he didn't return; nor the next day, or the next. She cried and worried incessantly. She shared, "They left as though they had died. We didn't know anything about them. There was no information, there were no telephones."

Finally, the family of a woman who was also missing from the village, came and asked her, "Is your husband here?" It was then clear that her husband and the woman had left together, taking the children.

Francisca was devastated. "*Me quede triste.*" (I was sad.) "What am I going to do now?" she told us. "I cried non-stop for 3 months."

Then she had a dream.

In the dream a man in his 30s, dressed in blue jeans, and a cotton shirt, came to her. He asked, "How are you?"

"I am well," she lied.

He responded, "You're well? You're hiding your sadness."



Francisca was scared at what he might think. "You know then?" she said.

"Don't be sad," he said. "Your children aren't going to return. And neither is your husband. Ever. For this reason, I came to console you. The children are fine. He is taking care of them. You have one and the other in your womb is going to be yours. Don't be sad. Be content with these two."

Francisca said, "thank you." Then she said, "But look at my legs and foot. I can't walk, I can't work in the fields. What am I going to do?"

The man said, "Work hard here. When you feel sad, sing your praises to God and pray."

"Thank you, that is what I'm going to do," she said.

Then, the man left.

And that is what she did – whenever she felt despondent, she prayed and praised; and blessed relief followed! And over the long years she, Marcos and Natividad did survive.

And not just that... her lost children, Andres and Juana, now young adults, eventually found her! They communicate with each other on a regular basis.

In March of this year, Francisca received an unexpected phone call. It was him. Her ex-husband surprised her saying, "I am thinking that we should come together and reconcile, all of us. I am so sorry and regret what I have done. Please forgive me." He cried and she cried. She said, "I already have forgiven you. May God forgive you as well."

We all sat there – silent.

"I feel better now," she said, and then she started singing a song.

*"Senor tu eres mi Dios, alabaré tu nombre... por que has hecho maravillas, alabaré tu nombre."*  
(Lord, you are my God, I will praise your name...because you have done marvels, I will praise your name.)

We all joined in the singing.

The guidance and encouragement God sent Francisca in a dream so many years ago, is what has carried her to the present day. Now, it carried us. The women left the meeting that day, uplifted, and two words have stayed with me from her story - prayer and praise – my first 'go to' now when times get tough.

Marlane Peterson, continues to fight the good fight with bile duct cancer. Javier Gonzalez is working hard on the ground in Guatemala, and I am doing the work of the bridge here in North Dakota.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for the work of Ixcán Ministries.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider

### **OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

Ixcán Ministries is a Christian lay mission serving as a ministry of presence with the Maya 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](http://www.ixcanministries.org)  
[ixcan\\_ministries@yahoo.com](mailto:ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com)  
Judy Van Lishout, President  
(701) 527-4858

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