



Dear Friends,

Recently, I was driving down a major Bismarck thoroughfare and saw her. It wasn't uncommon to see drifters, homeless men standing on this corner at the intersection where the red light stops the cars. Poverty looks very different here in the U.S. than from what I experience in rural Guatemala. What struck me this time was a disheveled middle-aged woman standing at the corner holding a cardboard sign that said, 'Lost my job, need help'. And I noticed she was crying. The green light whooshed me past her, but as I turned the corner, something in me said, "Go back."

I made a U-turn, drove back and parked in a lot of a McDonald's near to where she stood. As I approached her, I noticed her unkempt short hair, faded blue jeans, hooded sweatshirt, and tear-streaked cheeks.

"How are you? What's happening?" I asked. She told in a raspy voice how she had lost her job at a local budget motel and had to resort to this. She cried harder. My heart stirred. She needed more than a quick handout, so I said without thinking, "Come with me."

I learned her name was Veronica. We walked toward the McDonalds. "Are you hungry? Do you want to go in?" She shook her head no. "Where are you staying?" I asked. "My boyfriend and our two dogs are staying in a tent in a campground off of River Road."

Again, without thinking I asked, "Would you mind showing me your tent?"

This situation was unusual. I never do this, and had she been a man, I would not have even considered it. But I sensed her genuine goodness and I wanted to see first-hand where she lived.

During the twenty-minute car ride, I learned the man she was with was middle-aged and had multiple health issues and couldn't work. She had been working at the motel in exchange for a room but had been unjustly fired. They were broke. She had resorted to begging.

"You can't imagine how humiliating this is," she started to cry again. "No, no you'll get out of this, you're a worker. You need to clean up and get some help to get another job." I consoled. "Have you heard about Ministry on the Margins?" (Ministry on the Margins is a local outreach for the homeless.) She nodded 'yes.' "You need to get connected with them," I encouraged.

We arrived at the shore of the Missouri River. Off the side of the road was a small campground where a lone big tent stood. "That's it," she pointed. *It's true.* "Don't you get cold?" I asked. "Yes, it's getting colder," she said. "Is there a place to shower?" "No, that's the problem. I haven't showered in four days! I'm miserable!" I asked her how much a shower would cost at a nearby truck stop. "A shower costs around \$10.00," she explained.

I had heard and seen enough. When we returned to the parking lot she pointed to an older model car a few feet away. "That's my boyfriend. He watches from the car to make sure I stay safe." *At least she wasn't alone and they have a car.*

I looked at her cracked semi-polished nails and unwashed hand. I asked her, "Valerie, can I pray with you?"

"Yes, please!" she nodded. We sat in the car and held hands, closed our eyes and both prayed aloud softly. She wept.

After, I felt led to say, "Things are going to turn around for you. God is with you. Just trust and do your part." Before she got out of the car, I handed her \$20.00. "This isn't much but maybe it will pay for a shower."

She thanked me and got out of the car. I bent over the steering wheel to see the man in the car and waved. He waved back.

As I pulled out of the parking lot I thought, *I wish I could have done more.*

And forgot about it.

About two weeks later, I was at a Benedictine Oblate meeting and Zanne, my friend, walked up to me and grasped my hands. Zanne works at Ministry on the Margins. "Kathy, a woman came to me in the (Ministry on the Margins) chapel and asked for prayer. She told me, 'There's been a shift in our situation!' She proceeded to explain that Kathy, a missionary from Guatemala, had prayed with her." My eyes grew big... the woman was Veronica! "I know Kathy, she's my friend," affirmed Zanne. With tears streaming down her face, Veronica told Zanne, "Our lives changed after that prayer!"

Zanne told me how my praying with Veronica had given her hope and a sense that someone cared. Moreover, Ministry on the Margins had helped her to find a new job! They would temporarily house Veronica until she got her first paycheck and was back on her feet!

God had worked.

I stood flabbergasted. Who gets to hear how God answered a prayer prayed with a stranger?

When I pass by that intersection now, Veronica isn't there. I think of how she blessed and taught me an important lesson – to move on those 'inner nudges' and to never underestimate God working through very small things – when done with love.

Thank you for your support of Ixcán Ministries and the work we do with the materially poor in Guatemala.

We thank God for you.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



Zanne in the Ministry on the Margins chapel

Note: *Veronica's name has been changed to preserve anonymity.*



She is no longer here.

Mission Update:

Kathy will return to Guatemala from December 6th - January 22nd.

Ixcán Creations Product will be sold at the following locations in North Dakota:

- *Spirit of Life Catholic Church*, 801 1st St SE, Mandan
December 4th & 5th, Saturday and Sunday, before and after masses.
- *Christmas Market Open House*, 707 5th Ave. NW, Mandan
December 10th, Friday, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and December 11, Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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.

Our programs include- Scholarships, Community Library, Women's Micro-business, Medical, Housing, and Food Assistance, Spiritual and Pastoral Accompaniment, and Promotion of Peace and Justice.

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

Contact us or send a donation to:
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Judy Van Lishout, President

Purchase Ixcán Creations products at:
Tienda Marleny
(call 701-400-0708 to shop)