



Dear Friends,

She stayed after the meeting, sitting at my kitchen table, while I hovered about cleaning up. Inez (name change to protect privacy) recently started participating in our Luchadora's women's group, but I already knew her well. She is a skilled back-strap weaver in our Ixcán Creations microbusiness group, a faith-filled Catholic, mother of five, and married whose undocumented husband and young son are in the United States working.

I formed the Luchadora women's group a few years ago for the poorest of the poor – women who had been abandoned by the father of their children and are struggling to provide for themselves and their families. The group meets twice a month at the mission house where members can share in a setting of confidentiality and understanding. Everyone in the group knows the stigma, the struggle, and the rejection of being left and alone. In the meeting, after talking about their lives, a scripture passage is read and reflected on, followed by prayer. What these women go through as they *luchar* – fight to survive often shocks and humbles me.

That morning Inez stayed. As she was new, I asked her how the Luchadora meeting was going for her? Was it helpful? Relevant? To my surprise, she started crying. With tears streaming down her face she said, "Hermana, I almost abandoned my children." My heart dropped. "What do you mean you almost abandoned your children?" Then she said, "I almost ended my life."

She poured out her story of disillusionment, emotional abuse, and struggle of being alone and trying to provide for her children after her husband had left for the U.S. to try and better their lives. Things didn't work out. Her husband wasn't able to find full-time work, and then got sick. He barely was able to pay for his own living expenses, let alone send money to his family in Guatemala.

Vulnerable to the neighbor's gossip who degraded and broke her spirit, plus the fact that she came from another part of the country and her parents were no longer living, compounded her feelings of isolation and a lack of support. When her five-year-old daughter became ill and she had no money for medicine, her desperation took an even darker turn...she felt she couldn't go on any longer. "I am alone here. I gave up. I felt that it would be better for me to be dead. I decided to drink the liquid pesticide (they use on their crops)."

"But then you and Carmen came to visit me."

I sat across from her at the table now, in shock. I remembered the afternoon when Carmen (Ixcán Ministries' staff and friend) and I drove to the road near her home and then hiked in the mud to her house. I had felt the inner nudge to visit her, wondering what was going on because she had asked Javier for corn and had no food. Knowing her husband was in the U.S. it was expected that he would be sending money and providing for her and the children.

When we sat down with her in the simple dirt floor room, daughter held in her lap, her face drawn, she explained how her husband had been sick off and on with no full-time work. He was barely able to pay the high rent and have enough food for him and his son. Even though she wasn't officially 'abandoned' by her husband, her circumstances were the same- she worked tirelessly to meet all the needs of her family and kept coming up short.

"Would you be interested in joining a women's group for those who have been abandoned and are struggling?" I asked. "Ixcán Ministries provides 100 pounds of corn monthly, wood for cooking, and education for the children." We went over the requirements of twice per month meetings, a community service to be given for the corn and wood, and the children attending school and participating once a week in our library reinforcement reading program.



"Yes, I would like to participate," she concluded.

She had been coming. I had no idea what she had been going through on that afternoon when Carmen and I had gone to check on her. "After your visit, I felt that there was a solution. I had hope. In these meetings I find strength in God's Word and support from the other women." Clearly, Inez's need had been more than just material help.

Inez reminds me that we may not know what God is doing in even the simplest act of charity given. This time, I am really, really glad that I moved on that inner 'nudge' to go and visit her. God worked and she is still with us. Thanks be to God!

I give thanks for you in making our work possible by your prayers and financial donations.

May God continue to bless you and yours in this season of giving thanks.

Thank you for sharing with those who have less.

From all of us on the Board of Directors of Ixcán Ministries and the people of Santiago Ixcán, we wish you and yours a *Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving*.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



HAPPY  
*Thanksgiving*



---

### Mission Update:

Recent hurricanes have once again flooded the area near the Xalbal River where many of our community members want to plant corn, compromising that possible food source. In addition, price for cardamom, a main source of income, has crashed - which creates more hardship than usual in the face of the high cost of gas, corn and other basic goods. Our 'corn project' is operating to help those in need in the face of this crisis.

Kathy returned to the U.S. on September 9th and will be doing reverse mission work through January 2023.

*A special 'Muchas Gracias' to Spirit of Life Catholic Church in Mandan, North Dakota for the printing of our newsletters.*

### 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:  
Ixcán Ministries  
PO Box 51  
Mandan, ND 58554

[www.ixcanministries.org](http://www.ixcanministries.org)  
[ixcan\\_ministries@yahoo.com](mailto:ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com)  
Kathy Snider, Director  
(701) 425-1914

Purchase Ixcán Creations products at:  
**Tienda Marleny**  
[ixcan\\_ministries@yahoo.com](mailto:ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com)