

# San Lucas Mission

Fall 2008

# Parish News

## Don Max Campa

~ by Fr. Greg ~

Those first years of the early and mid '60s were "struggle to learn" years. It is true struggling to learn at all times is an integral part of life, and in that struggle we all grow, become better persons and contribute more to family, community and Church. However when I speak of "struggle to learn," I speak in the sense of coming to appreciate, to understand as best



Don Max Campa

possible and to respect a culture other than one's own. As Diocesan Priests we did have the benefit of study in a Maryknoll Language/Culture School in Huehuetenango, however preparation was short – way too short – only three months. The people of San Lucas were very patient and understanding as a whole. Some thought that those of us coming in from outside

had come to change their customs and traditions and in sundry ways encouraged us to go home. It took a little time, but one could understand that we certainly were a minority from outside (the country and the culture), and so fear of what we might bring and/or do could cause alarm. Also, Guatemala was at the very beginnings of a long civil war (1960 to Dec. 29, 1996) and fear of what might happen was not very far from the people's thoughts. One of the highly respected and regal appearing patriarchs of the community of San Lucas Toliman was Maximiliano Campa. Don Max was tall for a Kakchiquel Indian person, wore the traditional clothing of this place of birth (San Andres Semetabaj). His stride was long and steady, his head covered with a large sombrero, and held high in pride of his own person and heritage. Don Max was looked to by many for advice and appreciated by all. One day he came up to me in front of the Spanish Colonial Church building in San Lucas and asked, "Padre, why did you come here?"

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## New Montessori Center

~ by Katherine Mooney ~

Imagine a classroom with young children working on various activities at once, concentrating intently on the task before them. The teacher or "guide" carefully observes the children's work presenting creative learning opportunities as each child progresses. Materials and furniture, crafted by local artisans, are arranged and sequenced in a developmentally appropriate way provide an environment that fosters the individual curiosity and innate desire of each child to discover, learn and succeed. Local art, colorful weavings, paintings, and woodcarvings proudly displayed remind the children of their rich heritage. A small outdoor vegetable garden encourages the children to embrace their agricultural history and culture while promoting responsibility, observation and discovery.



Future Montessori Student

This is the dream of the "Colegio San Lucas" Montessori Center, an effort to introduce and implement hands-on discovery learning in the Parish elementary school, guided by the Montessori Method. An educational philosophy holding that children have an intrinsic love of learning and an incredible ability to absorb and understand the world around them, Montessori strives to nurture children in reaching their highest physical, spiritual, and intellectual potential.

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# San Lucas Fair ~ A Celebration of Culture

~ by Ashley Williamson

The town looks on in amazement and one can sense the excitement in the streets as the day-long construction of the Ferris wheel comes to an end. While this Ferris wheel may not appear so amazing to American eyes, to a small town with no more than a handful of two-story buildings, this is a spectacle. Every year the people look on in wonder as the town prepares to celebrate the Day of Saint Luke (San Lucas) on October 18.

“This celebration is a rich tradition in their culture,” explains Father Gregory Schaffer. “I encourage the people to honor this custom and enjoy this week of celebration.”

In honor of the Day of Saint Luke, the townspeople enjoy a week-long celebration known as “feria” with a variety of festivities and a vacation from work.

Mayhem of the feria streets begin at the base Ferris wheel on the edge of the park. From there, hundreds of wooden booths with vendors selling clothes, toys, CDs, movies, games and all sorts of greasy foods fill the streets. People mill about enjoying the feria and its food, only instead of seeing candied apples, corn-on-the-cob on a stick, slathered in mayonnaise and

ketchup in the hands of fair goers is more commonly seen.

As families eat their corn-on-a-stick treat, they line the streets for the morning parade hosted by the schools of San Lucas. The parade is complete with floats, beauty pageant queens, and the foot-tapping rhythm of marching bands.

Evenings are filled with dancing in the park and at the Cofradia. The night of Oct. 17, those at the Cofradia dance into the early morning to usher in the day of Saint Luke. At 3 a.m. Oct. 18, loud firecrackers set off waking the town and calling the people to church for more

celebration and early morning chatter until the 5 a.m. mass honoring Saint Luke and the community.

After mass, Saint Luke is processed through San Lucas on the shoulders of community members.

And after seven days of celebrating, eating, and dancing, weary eyes look on as the Ferris wheel is disassembled and packed away to be hauled off to the next town and the next feria.



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## Monstesori Center ~ cont'd from pg. 1 ~

As with any dream, there are challenges in realizing success. The San Lucas Mission construction program will be focusing its efforts in converting a large metal building adjacent to the Parish into a haven of encouragement and learning for children.

In building the center, Abram Hernandez, master tradesman, and his crew, along with the School Director, have identified three necessary phases: protecting the building from the outside, remodeling the inside, and equipping the classroom. Situated on the school playground, the building is subject to disruption by runaway basket and soccer balls. In safeguarding the building and gardens from recess, the construction crew will install a stone wall and fencing along the perimeter.

Remodeling of the inside will involve installing a false ceiling and walls to insulate the classroom, improve acoustics and add to overall aesthetics. Four existing windows will be enlarged and two additional windows added on the eastern side of the building. A division wall will be erected to leave a multi-purpose room for community use.

After building renovations are finished, child-sized furnishings such as shelving and tables will be built by local carpenters to house Montessori materials – also crafted by local artisans. Women of the community will weave wall hangings and children’s floor mats on the traditional back strap loom.

While physical elements of the center are assembled, so will the theoretical side through teacher workshops and open dialogue. The teachers have requested workshops addressing classroom management, behavioral issues, and basic methodologies. This vital step of the building process, offers the opportunity to develop teaching philosophy in ways that address immediate needs as teachers.

With the collaboration of many, the San Lucas Mission confidently takes the first steps toward realizing this dream. The journey will be slow, yet steady and we look with anticipation to the impact it will bring to the greater community of San Lucas Tolimán.

# New Stoves for New Communities

~ by Ashley Williamson & Veronica Palladino ~

In the night of September 13th, 2002 after heavy rain and flooding, a hillside above the coffee-farming community of El Porvenir, came crashing down the slopes of the nearby Toliman volcano through the community, killing 37 people. The damage to the village was devastating, with the majority of housing destroyed or buried under hardening rocks and mud. In response to the tragedy, the San Lucas Mission was able to acquire the funds to purchase a nearby plantation to relocate the three communities.

Partnering with the national government, the San Lucas Mission then labored to equip the new communities, recently providing the 298 homes in El Porvenir, Tierra Santa, and Totolya with fuel-efficient, smoke-reducing stoves.

In Guatemala, families often use a stove consisting of three rocks on the dirt floor with a shallow round skillet balanced on top. This make-shift stove not only consumes considerable time, energy, and money, but also creates health hazards.

The closed-fire technology of the new stoves improves the quality of life for the families in three ways by minimizing smoke and fumes, helping to reduce acute respiratory infections, providing security not found in an open fire, and using 2/3 less wood than traditional cooking.

The stove or “poyo,” as it is called, is provided to the recipient free of charge and Julio Morales, the Stove project coordinator, commented that “...the only thing asked is that they take care of their stove.” The total cost of a poyo, including materials, labor, and transportation, is about 1,180 quetzales, or \$155.00.



*Community illustration of disaster*

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## Don Max Campa ~ con't from pg. 1

“I would like to serve the people, Don Max,” was my easy, immediate reply. He looked me in the eye, said nothing, turned and walked away. I didn't think much about it other than the abrupt leaving made me watch his back as he walked away. Several days later, Don Max came again to ask the same question, “Padre, why did you come here?” I hesitated in my response wondering why the repeated question, “Don Max, I think I would like to serve the people.” Again I got his piercing look, and

then saying nothing, turned and walked away. It was the third time that Don Max approached me near the church that caused concern. I wondered if I were doing something wrong, offending people and not even knowing I was doing so. I might be making some serious cultural faux-pas that Don Max wanted to correct or at least bring to my attention.

“Don Max, we have been through this more than once now. I would like to serve the people!” Don Max looked into my eyes for what seemed like a long time trying to read what he saw there. He finally spoke, “Padre, I think you really do want to serve my people. So I want to give you some advice. I want you to know that to serve my people you must be patient, patient with yourself and patient with my people. You must learn to be patient - always.” He continued, “Padre, if I were younger I could teach you, but I am old now, so I can only give you advice - you must learn to be patient - always.”



## Online Coffee

We are excited to announce that buying your favorite, premium coffee that pays its workers a fair price has never been easier. Juan Ana coffee from the San Lucas Mision is available through our Web site at [www.sanlucasmision.org](http://www.sanlucasmision.org). Buyers may order the coffee directly through using any major credit card.



*Juan Ana Cafe ~ now online*

The coffee is \$7 for a 17 oz. bag and shipping charges will be applied accordingly to your order. To make the most of your order, reduce shipping costs per bag by ordering more than one. Fresh, Guatemalan coffee makes a great gift for any occasion.

Those who have purchased coffee through consignment in the past will still have the option to do so through the office in the Diocese of New Ulm.

What better way to read the mission newsletter or browse the Web site than with a cup of piping Juan Ana coffee in hand? So, visit [www.sanlucasmision.org](http://www.sanlucasmision.org) and order your cup today!

~ [www.sanlucasmision.org](http://www.sanlucasmision.org) ~

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## Principle of Solidarity ~ by Josiah Mooney

Christian social teaching is a body of teachings developed to help us apply the teachings of Jesus to our communal, social life. It is an evolving set of moral teaching that address contemporary questions and issues in the social, economic, and political life of society and human community. The four guiding principles of the teaching are: Human Dignity, Common Good, Solidarity and Subsidiarity.

The idea of solidarity within the principles of Christian social teaching conveys the humanity that we all share with others without regard for differences, respecting the personal, social, economic, and political rights of all peoples and cultures.

As one human family, we are called to a commitment of solidarity through responsibility to those who suffer injustice. To be a Christian - follower- of Jesus carries expectations for how we live, not only in personal aspects of our lives, but also in the social contexts within which our lives unfold.

As one of the four guiding principles of the San Lucas Mission, solidarity calls us to understand and respond to the suffering and needs of others, and in responding we 'walk with' others, neither behind pushing or in front pulling, but working together to structurally address poverty and its underlying causes. Doing so moves us to work systemically in promoting the integral development of the community.

The commitment of being in solidarity means, firstly, listening and learning about situations of injustice. The invitation extended to volunteers in accompanying the people of San Lucas is an opportunity for us, as outsiders, to learn from the people and their efforts to grow out of the process of poverty.

Learning about these problems is the first step. To truly be in solidarity, we must respond to the poverty, oppression and marginalization. We then commit and take on the responsibility to live in accompaniment, to advocate, and to work for the basic human rights of nutritious food, adequate shelter, access to affordable healthcare, proper education, and opportunity of work, and so that all may live in dignity.

Solidarity is an attitude and a way of life to commit oneself to the welfare of all - to the common good. This is the ongoing effort of the San Lucas Mission to respond to the expressed needs of the community, an attempt to walk in solidarity with San Lucans.

