

Letter from Bill Farrell to Ted Cassidy

Dear Ted,

It was nice speaking with you on the phone yesterday. I again want to thank you for visiting us here in Guatemala. It was a joy to have you with us and your attitude of "listening" and willingness to participate in anything impressed me a good deal. I will always remember your key word "OK – I guess it is your Marian background that made this so easy for you.

From the onset it was my hope to show you a side of Guatemala that few get to see when they come to visit or to study. I wanted you to see the Guatemala that I know and love and to see the face of the living and suffering Christ in its people – its Cathedrals. I enjoyed our visit with the lay Marianists who are working in Las Conches in Coban.

Of course Antigua for me is always a special place and a powerful reminder of the evil of the Conquest. Isn't it amazing the good work the indigenous slaves did for the Spaniards! They are still suffering the consequences of the conquest.

I tried to give you a balance and that is why we went to Mass at other parishes as well. Sometimes, living in Jocotalas, it is important to see the other side of Guatemala or one could become depressed by our barrio and the poverty, hopelessness and violence.

As you well know, Ted, things have not been good here. Much violence in the barrio in the last few months. Almost 14 murders this past month alone – all young men who are in our area. Last Wednesday it was a boy from the Marist Brothers High School – shot two times – but he is still alive and shall recover. One of the boys from Mi Casa is in hiding. The Marist Brothers have given him shelter at their Provincial House on the other side of town. How long that will last we don't know, but the plan is to probably move him to the other side of the country.

One other guy, Giovanni (who had been shot on two separate occasions) moved and is doing well but he had to cut all ties with family and friends, etc. I hope to visit him next weekend. A new game that the bad guys are playing now – they call a family and demand Q100000. If they don't have that amount, then they tell them that they will kill their son or child. It happened two days after you left to the family of one of the ladies who comes to our Mass. The police simply said

that there is no way to protect you, so we will help you move to a new location. How sad. I know of two cases like that now.

Holy Week is here and the processions, etc., are beautiful. I will send you some photos. We had a nice Mass in the house today (Tuesday of Holy Week). It will be our last Mass until Easter Monday. We learned during Mass that another 16-year-old boy known to the community was murdered on Sunday. So Holy Week seems to be no different than other weeks – the killing is continuing.

I have been busy house hunting. I want to open a house of studies for guys who need a safe place where they can live with dignity as they go to the university or try to finish high school. It will cost about \$300 a month and I will try to seek funding from project share or something – God will provide.

Well, Ted, please pray for us and for a stop to the killing

Para que ese mundo, malherido,desconcertado y todavia impenitentement sonador, sea de verdad casa feliz de un Humanidad fraterna.

Pece y bien, guillermo, sm

Bill Farrell, SM

