

## Defending Our Faith: The Alvarez Family in Mexico

Odilio shares about mission in General Cepeda:

"We arrived on Monday of Holy Week and hurried to get settled before we were invited to different gatherings. One of the first invitations was from Raul and his wife, Marta, who are FMC missionaries here in General Cepeda. Raul asked me to go with him to two of my favorite ranchos, San Francisco and Fermin.



"All I could think about when we visited Fermin was if I would see the man who left a huge impression on me during Intake almost two years ago. I think the elderly gentleman's name is Manuel. We had asked anyone

who wanted to share a testimony to come up. Manuel got up from the rickety bench and removed his cowboy hat. He stood there for a short while not saying anything. Then, he started talking about how he has lived in Fermin all of his life. He said that he remembered praying with his mom. But it was when he said this that I teared up: 'No one can come here and take away my Faith in God. They can try to drag me out of here but I will be fighting them all the way!' He said it with so much passion and sincerity. I don't know who 'they' are that would try to take his faith, but I looked around the rancho and it was so simple. I think what hit me most is that he probably doesn't own very much, except for his valuable Faith, which is something that he would be willing to fight for. It made me think of how our Faith is attacked today. Are we willing to fight for it or just sit back and not get 'into it'? I was happy to see him there again. He probably doesn't remember me, but it was good to encourage each other in our precious faith!"

## Raising the Poor from the Dust: Susanna Reports on God's Promises

Recently we had one of those precious "Yes, God is really working and using us" moments. We were having morning prayer together, joined as usual by the two girls who work for us. We were sharing our reflections on Psalm 113: "He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap."

I shared that we need to preach God's promises with more conviction- Yes, God came to actually lift the poor from the dust, the needy from the ash heap. He is capable of providing them with the basic needs of their families if they asked with faith.

Our friend looked at me attentively as I shared. For her and many of our friends over at Isla Bonita, this is not just a vague theological line of thought. These are people who do not have rice to feed their children every day, Does following God make any difference to those aspects of their life?

Then our friend from Isla Bonita began to share in broken English: "Before you came, I did not care about God. I knew He was there but I did not pray or read the Bible. I used to drink and spend all my time in the bar with my husband. We would leave the baby with my mother. We used to fight at home and hit each other. I used to work at a bakeshop, but my husband was jealous of the security guard. So he made me leave the job and stay home. He would always leave me at home and go wandering around. I hated it. I had no money for milk for my baby. Then I prayed that God would help me to know Him. Then you came to Isla Bonita. I thought you could help me know God. Now I have started praying every day. My husband comes straight home after work. We hardly fight any more, My husband reads the Bible you gave me too. He tell me 'What's the use of having a Bible if you don't read it?' So now I try to read it more." God heard her sincere prayer, and answered it through us!

*May God Abundantly Bless You!  
-Sarah Summers Granger*



April-May 2012

Sarah Granger  
Development Office

Dear Benefactors,

In May we celebrate the great Feast of the Ascension, the Great Commission, where Jesus tells us to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News to every creature!"

We celebrate the awesome task that Jesus gave us of proclaiming the Good News; we celebrate the blessing of faithful benefactors who make it possible; we celebrate all the work that we are given when we answer Christ's call; we celebrate those in far away lands who have been defending their faith for many years, and those who have just learned of the power of faith. Thank you for making this month special through your prayers and support, and join us in rejoicing that we are all called to Go!



**Celebrating Friendship in the Philippines**

## Busy and Blessed: Lindsey Romero Reports on a Week in the Life of Our Malaybalay Missionaries

After nearly four months here, we are busier than ever! Thankfully, our schedule is becoming more and more consistent from week to week. Here's what a week in our mission life looks like:

**Monday:** On Monday mornings we Skype with our friends and family. It is always a happy time in the mission house! Afterwards, we all love to share with each other about what's going on back at home. Monday afternoon we have our Desert Day. Following the example of Jesus, we find somewhere quiet to pray alone for a few hours. Then in the evening, Sammy and I have our date night. We usually go for a walk because the evenings are nice and cool. Finally, before bed, the whole team gathers for community night prayer. Monday is a peaceful, happy day that really fills us up for the busy week to come!

**Tuesday:** Tuesday morning is Romero family time! We have community prayer at 8:00 a.m. with our team and then Sammy and I take the kids to do something fun together as a family. This week we went shopping for supplies for our children's ministry. We love family day!

**Wednesday:** After morning prayer, our Wednesdays are usually spent blogging and preparing for various ministries until 3:00. At that time, we have our BEC meeting. BEC stands for Basic Ecclesial Community. It's a movement in the Church to establish small groups of neighbors that pray, serve, and fellowship together right where they live. Every week the meeting is held in a different house on our street. We meet from 3-5 to pray, share Scripture, and share about our lives. The BEC strengthens faith and community when Christ is invited into our everyday lives!

**Thursday:** Every Thursday at 5:00 p.m. we host a Bible study at our house. Initially, we thought we'd serve snacks, have fellowship time, and then have the study for about an hour and it would be over before dinner (Filipinos eat dinner around 7:30 or 8). However, Praise God, the Bible study is so popu-

lar and people are so eager to share that the discussion lasts late into the evening! We are now serving dinner after the Bible study! It gets bigger every week as more people hear about it and tell their friends. For some, it's the first time they've read the Bible or had anyone tell them that the Bible is applicable to their lives. It's so exciting to share in their discovery of who Jesus is and how much he loves them! All ages and backgrounds and social classes come to the study.

**Friday:** On Fridays after morning prayer we do our grocery shopping. Some things are more expensive here than in the USA and are harder to find, like milk products. So, we've had to modify our cooking and eating habits accordingly. In many ways this is a blessing, because even though we miss some foods from back home, we're now able to eat many things that are MUCH cheaper here than in the USA, and at the same time, inculturate our diet to our new home! Meals for our entire team, usually consisting of vegetables, rice, beans or chicken, and a little fruit for dessert cost between \$2-5 USD! And we usually have leftovers!!

After grocery shopping we have Visayan lessons on Friday afternoon. From 3-5 p.m. our neighbor and friend, Mayet Suazo, volunteers her time to help us learn the language. She's a great teacher! We are using the Bible as a learning tool because we can have the Visayan and English versions in front of us at the same time to familiarize ourselves with words and then we read favorite passages aloud to work on our pronunciation (this is usually a pretty humorous part of the lesson.) I recently had my first entire conversation in Visayan with a woman I met on the street! Please pray that we can continue to learn quickly and easily..

**Saturday:** From 8-11:30 a.m., Rebekah, Sarah, and Susanna teach ALS at Isla Bonita. The Alternative Learning System is for kids and teens who, for one reason or another (usually financial) cannot attend regular school. There's also a program for adults

who didn't finish school and would like to get their diploma. It's A LOT of work but the girls are very good at it and really enjoy it! They always make the lessons interesting and plan fun learning activities for the kids.

From 1:30-4:00 p.m. on Saturday afternoons we teach a Catechism class for the kids at Isla Bonita. We pray, sing songs, tell Bible stories, and do a fun activity. Kids of all ages come, from age 2 to teenagers (even the adults are curious and come, too!). Sharing the Word of God and loving on the kids at Isla Bonita is such a blessing to us.



**Sunday:** After 8:30 Mass we are now leading the youth group at San Roque Chapel, a tiny little chapel just down the highway from our house. Last Sunday,

there were about 30 youth present from age 12 to 20. The youth group is also the youth choir, and Sammy is excited about learning some new songs in Visayan and playing with them at Mass. Every other Sunday afternoon I lead a women's group at the Impalambong chapel (the chapel nearest to Isla Bonita). This past weekend was our first session, and 11 women came. These women are SO hungry for the Word of God! I gave a short biblical teaching on the value of women and our friend Babes gave a brief personal testimony. When we opened the floor for sharing, I was AMAZED at how the women opened up to the group! By the end of our session, everyone was crying and hugging and praising God. Many of them were hearing for the first time that women have value in God's eyes. It was such a beautiful time together, and the women are already inviting their friends to the next session! As you can see, the Lord has a lot planned for us each and every week. We are busy and very blessed!