

**December 24, 2012 – Christmas Mass at midnight**  
***Prepared by Brother Martin Shea, MM, Petén, Guatemala***

*Isaiah 9:1-6; Psalms 96:1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14*

The best parables are the ones that happen to us. The other day on my way to the Asilo – which is the home for the aged here in Petén – my bike took a skid on some loose gravel on the road near the home. The bike went over and I went down bumping my shin on the crossbar.

A little girl, she must have been all of seven or eight, came right over to me and her little hand reached out. I took it – it was so small – and it steadied me as I got up. With that she started to pick up the bike which was too big for her. Together we righted it and after she accepted a piece of bread I offered in thanks, she was on her way. I still have a bump on my leg and in my heart. I will keep them both.



As is the prophet Isaiah tells us: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone.” This light come to us in a simple manner – as a child’s smile, a baby in a manger or receiving help from one of God’s most lowly servants.

Though this photo isn’t one of the girl who helped me when I fell, she is one of the many children who come into my life and help me get through with a smile.

The Maryknoll Constitution (No. 30) calls us to a “vocation of service.” And Saint Matthew (23:1-12) says we are all brothers and sisters and “the greatest among you must be your servant.” So we continue to learn what it means to be “brother” and “sister” as in this parable of the little girl who helped a man on a bike, both three times her size.

That’s my story for now, but it really isn’t my story it’s the story of kids who come along and give us a hand in understanding the message of Christmas and a Child who came to us.

Merry Christmas, with a smile.