

**At this time that Sister Bernadette is born to eternal life and her eternal meeting with the Lord Jesus, we the community of San Jose el Tesoro in Yalpemech, Guatemala, want to proclaim the social and spiritual development that we have been experiencing, because of the unconditional support that we received from Sister Bernadette and especially the parish of St. Patrick, Hudson WI.**

**Our community of St. Joseph, El Tesoro began about 23 years ago. We came to this place in north Alta Verapaz, hoping to rebuild our lives and become a part of the social and productive life of our country after about ten years living as refugees in a foreign country. It was March 1, 1991. We arrived bringing only the basic necessities to survive those first days. We brought a few pieces of wood and some worn out tin roofs to build a simple home to begin a new life. That with trust and our faith in God and with much effort one day we would have better living conditions: that we might have a little bit of land to cultivate and to maintain our family and have a better home.**

**It was March 1991. Supported by the missionary work of the School Sisters of St. Francis, represented by Sister Joannes Klas who had been accompanying us since October of 1982 (in the refugee camp in Honduras) and is still with us today and hopefully will continue as long as possible, that we formally settled in San Jose el Tesoro. It was possible at this moment, thanks to an important relation that began between our community and the School Sisters of St. Francis and the solidarity of the people of St. Patrick's parish in Hudson, Wisconsin, especially Sister Bernadette.**

**With great joy and gratitude we want to share that today our community includes a church, a pastoral formation center, a very helpful telephone service, legal land titles, a child care center, an emergency health center, a better home for the majority of the families, electricity, an enclosed school yard. Most of the families have a tank to store water. Many young men and women have had the opportunity to finish high school and to begin a productive career as professionals. In addition, children, youth and adults have received formation in the faith, inserting themselves formally in their Christian baptismal commitment.**

**We want to mention that each year our sister parish from Hudson visits us; they come to know us and to share experiences, living with our families. In spite of difficulties they have lent a hand in different projects and activities. By this gesture of brotherhood and solidarity they have shown that there are no barriers that divide us because of color, language, culture or social position. Truly in the sight of God we are all equal. We are grateful for their friendship. If we were to list them all by name, it would fill many notebooks.**

**But while in our hearts we remember many names, the name of Sister Bernadette is special. We are certain that she lives forever in the presence of God and in the memory of our community.**

**Perhaps we have not mentioned the many gifts we have received, but in our hearts we will never forget and we are most grateful. We ask Sister Bernadette who now enjoys the presence of God for all eternity that she intercedes for us that this friendship and solidarity always be with you and us.**

**Sister Bernadette lives in our memory and we in San Jose el Tesoro will always remember her for starting the cattle project which we received in our association and which has been so helpful.**

**May God bless you all today and always. Many thanks from the community of Jose el Tesoro.**