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Cobán Pilgrimage Reflection

My name is Del Smith and I was privileged to go to Resurrection Priory in Cobán, Guatemala this April. As this was my second trip to Cobán, I had a good idea of what to expect. However, it seems that God always has something new in store for us when we step out of our comfort zone, and this trip was no exception.

The highlight for me again this year was the opportunity to deliver water purification systems to an aldea (village). The receipt of the water purifiers in a community is a major event, and everyone came to the church. There were speeches by the village leaders. Brother Juan, the water project coordinator, spoke, and some mothers who already have a purifier spoke about how it has improved the lives of their families. The members of the pilgrimage team took turns handing out the purifiers to the family leader as their name was called. Careful records are kept of which families receive a purifier. They are only distributed in aldeas that have a health care worker trained by Brother Juan at the priory.



We also had time to get to know the Monks at the priory better, and that is a unique experience. This trip I had the opportunity to spend more time with Brother Juan helping him to master the camera software that he uses to organize the photographic documentation of the water project progress. Father Cletus is a 90 year old priest who is the treasurer for the priory. He keeps track of the money and maintains a constant awareness of the latest exchange rate, to make sure the priory is making the best use of any donations. When he saw me working on computer issues with Brother Juan, he asked me to assist him in organizing files and shortcuts on his computer. As I followed him up the steps to the second floor where his room is, he apologized for being so slow as his age had slowed him down some. I really did not want to admit that, although he has more than 30 years on me, I did not feel that he was slowing me down at all! After I placed a YouTube Vatican shortcut on his computer, so he can access videos of the latest Vatican activities, he was so excited he literally jumped up and down off the floor.



I encourage everyone to speak to any member of the Cobán Connection to get more information on the water project. We are very fortunate to be involved in a project that can have such a direct and positive impact on so many lives, at such a reasonable cost. I also invite you to make plans to come with us on our pilgrimage in the spring of 2010. I guarantee that it will be a spiritually fulfilling experience.