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God's Hope Changes Women



SUE HEGARTY



SUPPORT PLEDGED



COSTA RICA

As we celebrate Christ bringing hope and salvation into the world at Christmas, I'd like to share a modern-day story of hope and transformation.

During the first session of "Being a Woman is Wonderful" course, the students are introduced to Soledad, a real person who wrote a poem about her life in 1986. Many women at the Pastoral Care for Women graduation referred to Soledad in their presentations and testimonies, because they can relate to her life and struggles and her deepest desires.

In her poem, Soledad explains that she lives with her alcoholic husband and five children in one room in her parents' home. She expresses how her life is hanging by a thread. One of the last stanzas paraphrased says:

"I want to run forward in search of Life, I want to fill myself with hope.

I want to feel like a person in the midst of my troubles, A person in the midst of the crowd.

I want to dream of a future, with a better future for my children and my children's children."

At the November graduation, around 50 women received their certificates, a number of whom were enabled to study by receiving scholarships through the IM project "Women Forging New Paths in Costa Rica". Florencia was one of them, a 46-year-old wife and mother, who never finished high school. She is a woman of faith, but learned much in the course.

For her final class project, Florencia wrote a poem that contrasted with Soledad's tragic one. Here are a few excerpts:

"For many years I lived in darkness among the shadows, trying to hide myself from others' eyes, feeling chained by my fears, not wanting to fight for my dreams, out of fear of facing new and unknown things. Simply thinking of failure terrified me and I preferred to not make the attempt. And that is how I began leaving behind all my dreams, feeling frustrated and without worth.

"Today I want to be free of all my fears and fight. Today I know that I am important, I am a princess because I am the daughter of a King...I know that I am not alone, that God is with me.

"From today on I want to be optimistic, to believe in myself and in the capacity and potential that God has given me. This is how I will build a better future as a mother, wife and especially as a woman, a person, because my dreams also matter.

"I want to open my wings, I want to begin to fly, I will also be in solidarity with others and with those who need a helping hand in their difficult moments,...May they feel the support and backing of an Almighty God...

"I am Florencia and I am willing to change, I am a woman and I am Capable."

Florencia is just one of the changed women through your support of Pastoral Care for Women and the IM Project "Women Forging New Paths in Costa Rica". (The project fund is very low, if you would like to make a gift to help women in 2017.) Thank you for spreading Christ's love and hope.

Blessed Christmas!