



**"I wished I died
instead of my son."**

Dear Friend in Christ,

High in the mountains of Chiquimula, Guatemala, a little boy named Ovidio breathes heavily as he rests in a dirty hammock. Ovidio Diaz is currently 3 years old — the same age his brother Felipe was when he died of severe malnutrition.

In presenting you with this empty lunch sack, I am begging for food on behalf of starving children like Ovidio. Please help me get lifesaving food to him so that he doesn't share his brother's fate. At this minute, extreme poverty and undernourishment threaten to claim another innocent child's life.

*"... it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost."
(Matthew 18:14b)*

Filled with sorrow, Transis Diaz described the loss of her son Felipe in saying, "I wanted to die." Felipe died of "a big stomach and diarrhea," according to the distraught mother. Distended bellies are clear indicators of severe malnourishment. This extreme lack of nutrition can allow curable conditions like dehydration to kill starving children.

Transis and her husband, Miguel, have three girls and two boys, including Ovidio. Miguel, 57, tries to feed his suffering family by planting corn and cutting coffee plants. During the summer — the dry season — there is no work throughout the region. During the rainy season, Miguel is forced to compete against younger, stronger men for the few jobs that are available. On a successful day during the winter, Miguel can make \$1.50.



(over please)

Generations of poor Guatemalan families are born into the only land available to them, high in the mountains. Miguel desperately walks two or three hours down to town in search of work and food. Meanwhile, at home, Transis endures the anguish heard in her children's cries and seen in their faces.



“I ask God for His power to help us provide for the kids,” Transis says, as she feebly attempts to breastfeed her youngest son. At 40 years of age, lethargic from malnourishment, Transis is producing little, if any, milk. When she finishes and looks up, depression and numbness glaze over the mother's eyes and face.

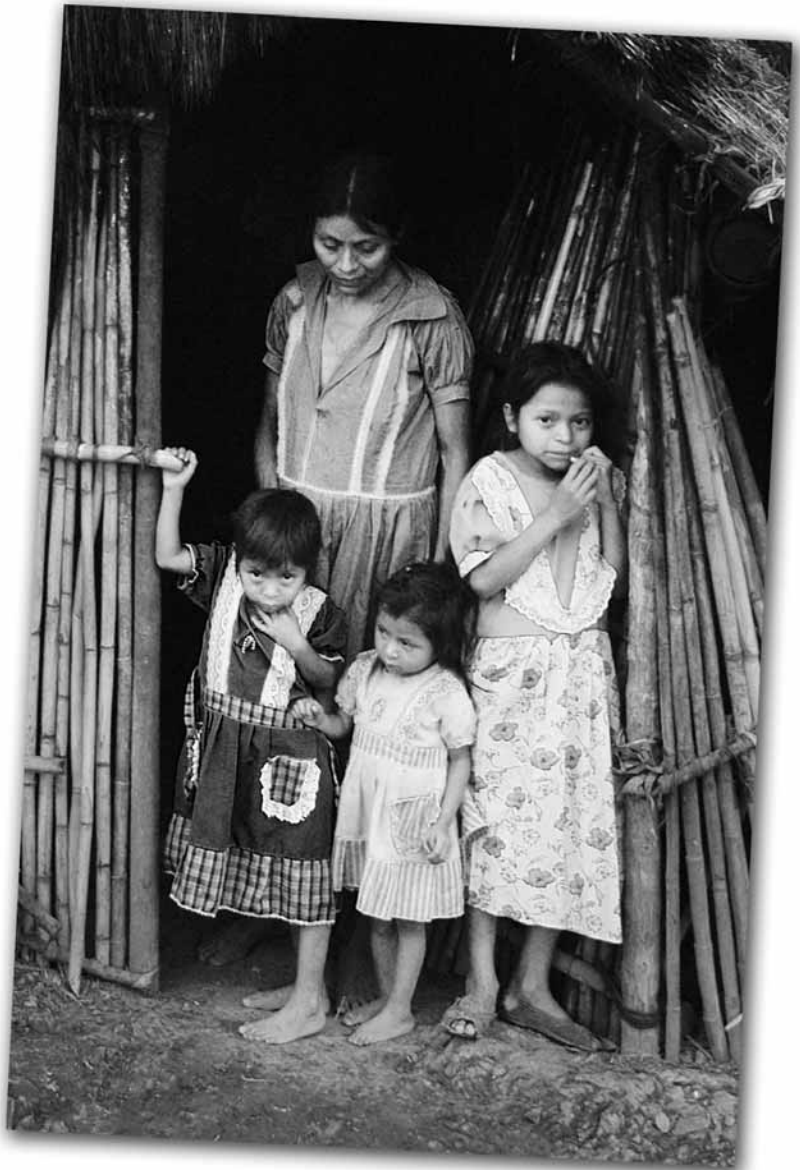
A few years ago, Miguel rushed his sickly son, Felipe, down the mountains to a hospital. He spent his nights there and believed Felipe had become stable at one point. However, soon



thereafter, the hopeful father would receive news of his young son's death. "I wished I died instead of my son," Miguel remembered.

Carrying this news home to Transis was the heaviest thing Miguel has ever lugged up the mountains of Chiquimula. He and his devastated wife huddled the rest of their children together and cried over them for the rest of that day.

Today, a single sack of corn lays in the corner of this family's darkened hut, a few feet from Ovidio's hammock. These kernels are the remainder of the family's summer food storage. Please... we must help feed them.



Those who have lost a child say it is by far the greatest and most enduring pain they have ever experienced. I cannot bear the thought of this family losing one more child due to a lack of food.

It's amazing how lifesaving differences can come about from our simplest offerings. In thanksgiving to God, please share your daily bread with these starving little ones by helping to fill this lunch bag.

"This, rather, is the fasting that I wish... sharing your bread with the hungry..."
(Isaiah 58:6a, 7a)

For her endangered son, Transis prayed, "I feel pain and cry a lot. God, You're the first one. Please put Your powerful hand over him. Please don't let any more of my children die. Please take care of him. We are under Your power. Only You can

help us if You want. I know You are going to help. Please, whatever You want to send is okay.”

As Transis continued in prayer, “I can’t do anything...” Jesus could be heard pleading within her final heartbreaking request. She asked simply, “...can You help me?”

A servant of the poor,



Robin G. Mahfood

P.S. Please allow your heart to fill a starving child’s empty brown bag today. Children like Ovidio are currently on the brink of starvation. A gift of any kind will help save God’s little ones, one child at a time.

