

JOURNEY TO GUATEMALA

■ CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

We were made in God's image and likeness. That means that every human being has special value and a purpose. We need to care for each other so we can be the people God calls us to be.

ENCOUNTER NORMA

For young families living in the mountains of Guatemala, raising a baby can be hard. Most families grow corn and beans for a living, but a long-standing drought has caused harvests to shrink. There are few job opportunities, which means putting food on the table is a daily challenge. That's why when Norma discovered she was pregnant, she wondered how she would manage. "When I was young, my mom and dad didn't have money to buy much food," she says. "My mom would split one egg among four children." Norma wanted more for her son, Victor.

But at age 20, she didn't have much experience beyond helping her mother around the house. So, she looked for help. She found it in a CRS-sponsored program that teaches young mothers how to raise healthy children, grow nutritious food in small gardens and manage a healthy diet. Plus, CRS provided Norma with food throughout her pregnancy and monthly medical check-ups during Victor's first two years of life.

"I learned a lot of beautiful things," Norma says. "I learned how to take care of my boy and what foods to feed him so that he can grow healthy and strong."

Now, Norma is sharing what she learned with others as a "mother monitor." "It makes me proud to share the experience I had and the lessons I learned with other women," she says. It makes Norma proud—and makes her community a better place to raise a family.



Photo by Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

SHARE THE JOURNEY

Nutritious food is necessary for a dignified life. If none is available, families may be forced to migrate.

FACTS TO CONSIDER

Population: 15,460,732

Size: 108,889 square miles; slightly smaller than Pennsylvania

- Guatemala has the highest population of all the countries in Central America, as well as the youngest—almost half of the population is under the age of 19.
- CRS has been providing humanitarian assistance in Guatemala since 1963, supporting food security, nutrition, health, agriculture, education, disaster risk reduction and emergency response programs.
- CRS Guatemala works with YouthBuild, which provides employment, education and leadership opportunities to young people.



For downloadable photos, visit crsricebowl.org/photos and watch a video about Norma at crsricebowl.org/stories.