

Saúl & Pilar Cruz

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Our friends,

Almost two weeks ago Pilar and I celebrated our 33rd wedding Anniversary. What a joy it was to spend it together with the wonderful students of the Armonia residence in Oaxaca. Everything seemed so beautiful and bright, especially my dear wife. We thanked our Lord for our children -- Eidi and Saul Jr.-- our Ministry among the needy and all of you.

After the flu scare, we had to face its economic effects. It has not been easy on the poor not to be paid their wages for two and a half weeks and then being let go because many companies did not have money and have been closing as a result of the terrible drop in the Mexican economy (-8.2% this trimester). We responded to this crisis by taking food to the poorest 120 families in Armonia's Transformation Centers once a week for a whole month thanks to your sacrificial support.

Ahead of us were some important trips and the navigation of a summer with very few resources as many groups who were going to come to help us canceled their trips. Pilar and I thought we could manage this with our good Lord's help, and as we were preparing for the further work, Pilar developed a disease referred to as the Ramsay Hunt syndrome, or herpes zoster oticus. Ramsay Hunt Syndrome is not contagious and can only develop in patients who have had chickenpox. It is a disorder that is caused by the reactivation of pre-existing [herpes zoster](#) virus in a nerve cell bundle. It has affected her hearing, her right eye lid, paralyzing her facial muscles and caused great risk for her hearing and sight. This started the day of our anniversary, and it took us completely off guard. The first symptom was ear pain, together with a strange red bump behind her right ear, and she was misdiagnosed with having an ear infection. By Wednesday of last week, when the symptoms were getting much worse, we took her to the hospital and found out about the actual cause, which was much worse. Many things have happened since then, like facial paralysis, the need for a patch to protect her eye, dizziness and much pain. As you might imagine, several doctors have seen her, and now we are waiting to see how the problem keeps developing.

It seems like the crisis has not come to a peak yet, as she still has inflammation inside her ear. This is very difficult, as it came in the middle of a vision trip, when twelve wonderful friends from the US came to visit Armonia in a very fast-paced weekend, seeing all the projects in Mexico City and Oaxaca. Of course, Pilar could not be part of it, and it was difficult for me to be away from her. I just arrived back from Oaxaca very late last night because I am really concerned about the new vertigo symptoms, and how this will develop. Naturally, she is being forbidden to travel. There is a lady we have hired to be with her most of the daytime, and our son has not been very far from her side during these days. But she definitely feels better when I am around, and likewise for me.

We need your prayers for patience, endurance and improvement in Pilar's condition.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Saul Cruz