



Prayer... It is so important in this relationship. In prayer, we open ourselves to the Spirit of God, and to our brothers and sisters throughout the world. As we pray in community, we pray for and with our Sister Parish. We know that, in prayer, we are one in Christ.

Learning about our Sister Parish.... through reading, by listening to talks or watching movies, or by sharing some of the crafts, songs, stories and pictures of San Jose.... moves us out of our easy chairs in Seahurst, and begins to open our vision to the lives of others in the world. It's so easy to be lulled into the illusion that our world is the only world.... but exchanging stories with a culture so different from our own broadens our vision. We learn about the reality of poverty, of oppression, of a joy-filled spirituality grounded in everyday life. Our Salvadoran sisters and brothers have the opportunity to develop new perceptions, and perhaps move beyond stereotypes, in learning about the kindness and concern and everyday struggles of those of us who live in St. Francis Parish. .

Domingo has been orphaned by the war.



Mountain village of Arcatao.

Q *How is the money for our sister parish being used?*

A The money that we send to Padre Manuel is a significant part of our Sister Parish Program. . "In the name of all the communities of the parish, we want to express our profound gratefulness for the valuable economic support which you have sent." (Pastoral Council of San Jose Ojos de Agua)

The money is being used to rebuild the church community that was devastated by years of civil war. The priorities established by the parish of San Jose Ojos de Agua are to promote programs for training of lay pastoral workers, support the efforts of the clergy in reaching out to the scattered and remote communities of the parish, increase educational opportunities for the children, and improve housing conditions for the most needy members of the parish.

Some of the projects being undertaken are the purchase of land to build a house for Adelia, a woman with seven children, and to improve the home of Nina Rosa, an older widow. Three students are able to continue their education with tuition paid by the parish.



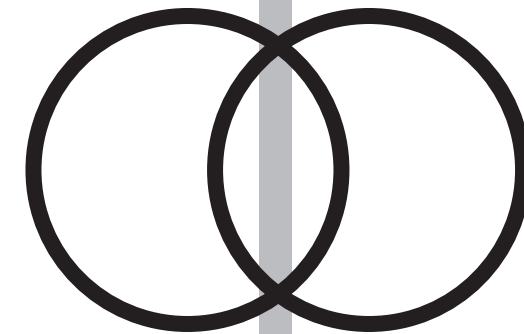
Layworkers arriving for pastoral training.



News about our Sister Parish

San Jose

No. 4



Sister Parish Relationship

Communication with our sister parish continues to go well, and on a frequent basis. Since our last newsletter we have received several e-mail letters from Fr. Manuel and from **Jeri Schultz**, our liaison person and facilitator with Padre Manuel and the parishioners of San Jose.



Padre Manuel always sends his fraternal greetings and prayers and assures us that we are remembered in their daily and Sunday prayers, and notes that it's "nice to have prayers going both ways". He tells of evangelization missions, and fiestas held in the communities he serves in the parish of San Jose.

Padre also wants us to know how our donations are benefiting the parishioners, including purchase of land for housing and schools, for scholarships, for training of catechists, for Padre's vehicle maintenance and transportation, etc. In the month of October, a piece of land was purchased in the community of Montanita for a school which a non-governmental agency will help them build. There are about 35 families who live in the community. Right now Kindergarten through third grade is offered and the classes are being held in the church. Now



that the school will be built, they'll be able to offer up through sixth grade. Two teachers who are currently teaching the classes are contracted by the diocese but their salaries are paid by the government through an organization called FIAS. However, there is virtually no money for supplies, etc., but at least they've got the money to pay the teachers.

Padre Manuel writes (in Spanish): "In this month of missions the majority of our communities are moving ahead on evangelizing missions in which there has been a great deal of enthusiasm. In addition the Holy Rosario is being prayed in homes, as this is the month of the Holy Rosario. Today (October 12) the community of Las Vueltas is "in fiesta", celebrating the 10th anniversary of the return of the population, when during the war it was necessary that they left in exile for Honduras.

...Greetings to all, and know that in these days Jeri and I have been remembering you and that one year ago we were with you all. May God and our Lady of the Holy Rosary bless you. Adios." P. Manuel



St. Francis Bazaar To Feature Embroidery From Sister Parish Women

Hand embroidered garments and crafts made by the Women's Craft Guild of our Sister Parish will be available at the St. Francis Parish Bazaar on Saturday, November 22 from 9am to 4pm. Some of the items to be featured are: children and adult T-shirts, children vests and dresses, pillow cases, greeting cards, wall hangings, table cloth & napkin sets, Christmas table

runners, hair barrettes, coin purses, key chains & necklaces. Samples may be seen at the Sr. Parish bulletin board. All proceeds from the sale of these items will be the sole support of these women and their families who have no other economic resources.

Eleanor Harold Visits Sister Parish

St. Francis parishioner Eleanor Harold left November 8th to visit her friend, Jeri Schultz at La Ceiba in El Salvador. She will return November 18th, bringing crafts for our parish bazaar and latest insights on life in our sister parish.



Socio-economic Status: Debt & Economic Policy Threaten Land Reform.

Without some form of debt relief, many fear that El Salvador will quickly begin to see a re-concentration of land holding. About half the population of the country (including nearly all of San Jose Parish) still lives in rural areas, and agriculture continues to be the largest single source of employment. Rural poverty continues to be a major problem. More than a quarter of rural households live in extreme poverty. Under El Salvador's 1980 agrarian reform program, and the 1992 peace accord's Land Transfer Program (PTT), many of these new small farmers are faced with mounting land debts and few resources to meet payment schedules. The beneficiaries of these programs received loans to be paid off on "relatively easy" terms over a 30-year period. But even



"easy" terms are not easy for campesinos with few resources, limited market access and infrastructure, and who because of accumulated debt (production debt that was not part of the debt forgiveness package and 17 years of accumulated interest) are now unable to receive further production credit. If they are not able to produce enough to provide food and income for their families, these farmers may feel forced to sell their newly acquired land.

The rightist, pro-business ARENA government has virtually abandoned the rural economy, say many critics who argue that "in order not to jeopardize the peace process and avoid a future crisis, the Salvadoran government must be urged to complete the Accords and take serious measures to address poverty and promote sustainability of the PTT and small farm sector".

It is noted that soon after our last newsletter (July 13,1997) Archbishop Fernando Saenz Lacalle of San Salvador resigned from his position of Brigadier-General in the Salvadoran Army.

Coming

events:

Nov. 9 - MOVIE: "ROMERO" in Unity Place - Sunday at 7pm. This powerful movie is a look at the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador who is forced by the disappearance and mass murders of many of his parishioners to take a stand that ultimately leads to his assassination in 1980 at the hands of the military Junta. The picture is rated PG-13 because of some violent scenes. We will provide treats from a Salvadoran bakery. The evening will close with a short prayer service.



Nov. 15 & 16 -A collection for our Sister Parish after all Masses.

Tues. Dec. 2 - at 7pm - A Memorial Vigil Service will be held in St. Francis Church commemorating the 17th anniversary of the witness of the four church women, Maureen Clarke, Ita Ford, Jean Donovan & Dorothy Kazel, who gave their lives for the people of El Salvador. Father Brian Allbright, MM., who served Salvadoran refugees in Honduras during the war, will conduct the service. Immediately following, in Unity Place, guest speaker Sister Eleanor Gilmore, CSJP, will share her ex-

In retrospect

In December of 1996, two of our parishioners, Rosanne Michaels and Sandi Montgomery, spent two weeks visiting our sister parish San Jose. We asked each of them the following four questions. Rosanne's responses are given below. Sandi's responses will be in our next San Jose bulletin.



What caused you to become interested in the Sister Parish relationship with San Jose in El Salvador?

Rosanne

Last October, my husband Jack and I had the privilege of being one of the host families for Padres Manuel and Tulio when they visited Saint Francis of Assisi. During the time they spent visiting us, we spent many hours talking with them, hearing stories of the suffering the people of El Salvador had endured during the war years, and the poverty and oppression that are still part of their lives. There were so many stories... of mothers whose children had been killed. .. of family members being separated from one another. Again and again, we heard about how people were forced to flee their villages, and later return to find ruins where their homes had been.

Somehow, right in the middle of these stories of tragedy and suffering, there was an incredibly powerful Christian joy. I heard it when the Padres would break in spontaneous songs. I heard it in the stories of forgiveness. .. stories of how mothers and brothers could speak healing words of forgiveness following the murders of their loved ones.

Just two months later, the opportunity came to actually go to El Salvador. Frankly, I didn't have long to think about it. My window of free time was in front of me, and our sister parish was requesting that a couple of us come to "experience their reality." Going was a gut reaction. Knowing the Padres, and learning more about El Salvador caused a "yes" to rise up.



Q After time has passed.... What is there that still stands out about San Jose?

A Sandi and I spent nearly two weeks in El Salvador last December. Those two weeks have caused profound differences in the way I look at my family, my friends, my Church, and world. Something in my vision is different, and it has to do with the spiritual gifts offered by the people of our Sister Parish.



Since my visit to El Salvador, I can sometimes glimpse a new sense of "freedom," of letting go of some of our "North American" need for security, and simply resting in God. Here in the States, we are lulled by a sense of false security, of feeling that if we have bank accounts, and health insurance, and retirement plans, that everything is under control. Sometimes, in really subtle ways, this gets in the way of trusting God. In Salvador, the people just didn't have these things.... and had a very real sense of God in their midst, in their daily lives, in every breath they took. This was, for me, the essence of the experience in Salvador.

Finding God in community has increasingly been part of my life since returning from Salvador.... I learned something about finding God in reaching out to one another, about focusing on the common good rather than on the individual rights that are so much a part of our culture.

Lastly, each and every day, I recall how the Salvadorans offered the gift of learning to live more spontaneously.... (And honestly, this remains my greatest struggle!) People were not tied so closely to a clock that they didn't take a moment to praise God, or to sing, or to notice the sun, the birds, and the roosters.

Q What can we really do to bring about an effective relationship with our Sister Parish?

A The first one that everybody thinks of is money... Yes, we are sending money to our Sister Parish, and that is a very important part of the relationship. Quite simply, we have the economic resources to make a real difference in lives of our Sister Parish members.... It's important to realize, though, that the goals and priorities of deciding how that money is used is something that is decided in our Sister Parish. (More about that later!)