

Our responsibility to the poor

Pope John Paul II has written, "Sacred Scripture continually speaks to us of an active commitment to our neighbor and demands of us a shared responsibility for all of humanity. This duty is not limited to one's own family,



nation or state, but extends progressively to all... so no one can consider himself indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family." centesimus Annus, 51. According to Pope John Paul II, solidarity with the human family consists in a "firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good." Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 38.

From the U.S. Bishops' meeting, November 10-12, 1997:

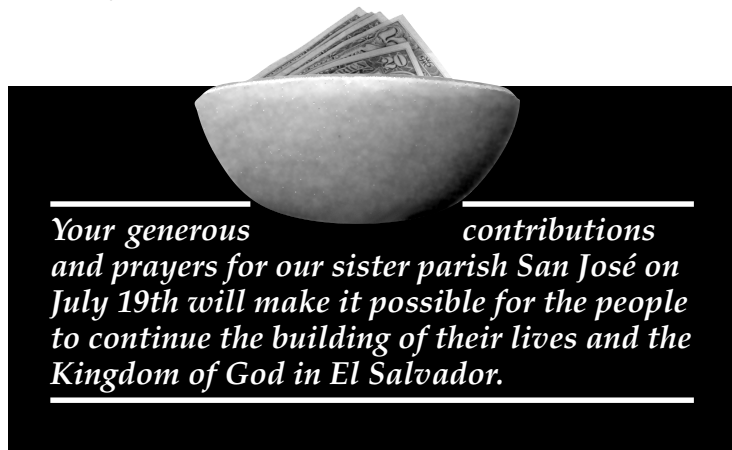
Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions of our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny; and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles.

More and more parishes are making global solidarity an integral part of parish ministry. They understand that social mission and solidarity are not a task for a few and that concern for the church

in foreign lands cannot be confined to just an occasional small offering. Christ is calling us to do more. In a sense, our parishes need to be more Catholic and less parochial. A parish's Catholicity is illustrated in its willingness to go beyond its own boundaries to extend the gospel, serve those in need and work for global justice and peace. This is not a work for a few agencies or one parish committee but for every

believer and every local community of faith. This solidarity is expressed in our prayer and stewardship, how we form our children and invest our resources, the choices we make at work and in the public arena.

QUARTERLY COLLECTION

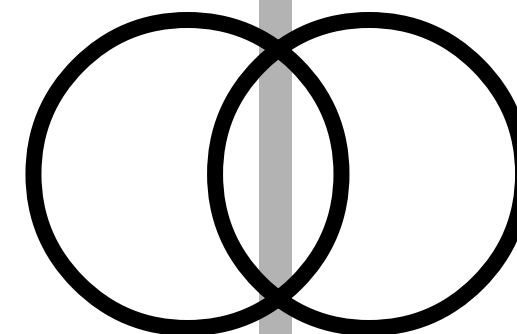


Your generous contributions and prayers for our sister parish San José on July 19th will make it possible for the people to continue the building of their lives and the Kingdom of God in El Salvador.

News about our Sister Parish *San Jose*

July 1998

No. 7



Sister Parish Relationship

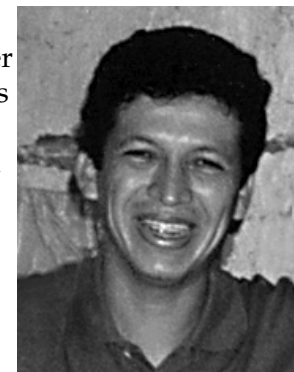
Hello brothers & sisters:

I hope that the joy of the Easter and Pentecostal seasons brings you happiness and the desire to keep building the Kingdom of God. We have hoped to write to tell you a little about how things are going with your sister parish. In this month of May, we've come to the end of our community missions at the anniversary of the "Massacre of Sumpul" where the 1980 army killed over 800 people... children to elders. Also, we've had the visit of the Virgin of Peace, patron of our country. All this has been very important to the fervor and hope of the people.

On the 31st of May we'll have the celebration of Pentecost at a single Mass where all the communities make a pilgrimage and congregate to ask for rain (since we haven't had any), and celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. All this is possible (to give the people transportation) thanks to your help. This will be the first time that we could do it in this way.

The rest of the people are doing well. A member of your parish named Tom (Fletcher) is visiting during his travels. OK, take care and God bless you.

Padre Manuel



New Pastor

Our Sister Parish of San José Ojos de Agua in El Salvador has a new pastor. Meet Padre Raul Wilibaldo Abrego, ordained Jan. 23, 1998 and now serving the 32 villages which comprise our sister parish. He was ordained in the cathedral of Chalatenango. Please check

our sister parish bulletin board for a picture essay of his special day ~ the Ordination Mass (in which Padres Manuel and Tulio played special roles) and the lively Fiesta celebration which

Padre Manuel welcomes padre Wilibaldo as new pastor of San Jose Ojos de Agua.



followed. We hope to bring Padre Wilibaldo to visit St. Francis Parish soon so we may meet him in person.

More pictures on our bulletin board show the Mayor of Las Vueltas, Padre Manuel and 3 youths hosting a radio program called, "Youth and Democracy". It was broadcast from the Jesuit University radio station in San Salvador.

Two of our parishioners, Rosanne Michaels and Kathy Sterling are leaving July 8th to visit our sister parish, San José. This will be the second trip for Rosanne and the first for Kathy. They will fly from Seattle to Houston, Texas on July 8th and from Houston will fly directly to San José. They will be accompanied by Jeri Schultz who will act as their interpreter. You may recall that Jeri interpreted for Padre Manuel Acosta when he said Mass and spoke to us at St. Francis over a year ago.

Kathy Sterling is a Pastoral Assistant for Outreach Ministry and has been a long-time member of this parish.



Q *Why am I going to El Salvador?*

A I have never been to El Salvador but as an outreach coordinator at St. Francis, I think that it will help me to be more effective in my job, to be able to meet in person members of our sister parish. I will also be able to share with our parish all that I learn at San Jose.

As a staff person I receive calls concerning our sister parish, and how we might help them in a tangible way. A first hand visit will help me to answer these questions more effectively.

Q *What are my expectations?*

A My first expectation is that I hope this visit will cement relationships made previously and that Rosanne and I may make new contacts and friends.

My second expectation is that we may discover new needs of the people and how we at St. Francis may be able to respond effectively to them.

One of my experiences responding to peoples needs was working as a street minister serving hot meals to those in need every Saturday outside the Lutheran Compass Center. We took turns making chili and corn bread at home and bringing it to the Center. We were Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists and Pentecostals - all working together.

Since we will be visiting El Salvador during the mosquito season, the Seattle Health Department has given us a lot of good information and have prepared us for typhoid, malaria and hepatitis A. We start our medications two weeks before we leave and continue them for four weeks after we return.

Pray that we will have a successful visit.

Rosanne is a co-chair of the sister parish committee and will be returning for her second visit.



Q *Why am I going to El Salvador again?*

A First of all, Jack and I both have a strong commitment to the Sister Parish project at St. Francis. This effort is more than just a fund raising effort for the people of San José parish. It is a people-to-people exchange...a sharing of two cultures, a sharing of stories, an opportunity to learn about the struggles and joys of one another, a prayerful sharing of everyday life. For this it is so helpful to have face-to-face interaction. That's why I believe this needs to be a "gente a gente" ...people to people project...and that can happen best when people at both parishes find ways to talk with one another...at times, in person. I think it's important that Kathy and I, and the members of future delegations, bring greetings to all the parishioners at San José parish, and that we share with them some-

thing of life at St. Francis parish. Upon our return, we will share stories of the people of San José parish.

Frankly, it's been difficult to find parishioners willing to travel to El Salvador. Obviously, there are many good reasons that people are unable to take this step. Because we've canceled two proposed delegations within the last year, we felt that we needed to go ahead with this trip. That is a very practical reason why I am going. My hope is that Kathy and I can return, share our experience, and perhaps encourage others to go in the future. The warmth of the people of El Salvador, and the beauty of the countryside are so moving that the reality of the heat and lack of the "fancy accommodations" just don't seem to matter. The simplicity of the Salvadoran lifestyle shouldn't deter people....and I'm speaking as a former New Yorker whose idea of "roughing it" was to take a sack lunch to Central Park!

Another important reason to go is to facilitate a transition in the leadership of both parishes. Jeri Schultz, the lay missionary who has lived in our San José parish, and has been instrumental in helping us start and sustain the Sister Parish Project, has completed her four year term in El Salvador and is back in North Dakota. Padre Manuel Acosta, who has been the priest in San José, is about to leave the parish to study in Spain and Italy. We have a new priest in San José, Padre Wilibaldo, and we have a newly trained pastoral council working on the Sister Parish Project. And, naturally, we need to tell the people about our leadership transitions....about Fr. Phil and Fr. Jerry. I think it's really important that at least a couple of St. Francis parishioners go to help facilitate the transition...to let the new lay leadership and priest know that we at St. Francis Parish continue to desire this relationship, to ask how we can help the people of San José rebuild their homes and their lives following the devastation of the war, to just talk about how we can continue to work and pray together.

I have some more personal reasons for going to El Salvador again. There is a desire to simply visit old friends. I look forward to seeing Nina Rosa in her new house built with funds from St. Francis. I might get to meet some of the students who are

going to school because of the generosity of parishioners here. I can meet personally the pastoral workers who have been trained over the past year...again thanks to this relationship. And, I really look forward to meeting the talented group of women who have been getting together to sew crafts for St. Francis! Yes, the people we have written about in the Sister Parish newsletters are real people. I miss them and look forward to sharing some eggs and beans with them again! My only wish is that more parishioners from St. Francis will share this experience in the years to come!

Q *What are my expectations?*

A I want to go there without a lot of expectations...with a freedom and openness to the Spirit of God alive in the people. In El Salvador, I saw such joy in the face of profound suffering and oppression. I felt such a strong sense of community. I want to go back to El Salvador, to the generous, suffering, forgiving, joy-filled people of El Salvador because something happened to me there...something that goes beyond words... something that has to do with acknowledging my own powerlessness, with having my heart cracked open, with being filled with new compassion. I want to go back to El Salvador because I long to share again the spontaneous bursts of music and laughter, and to be again in the presence of people so willing to share their love with all of us.

Crafts still available

During the past year, Betty Stadler has offered for sale to parishioners a wonderful variety of goods made by workers from the villages which make up the parish of San José Ojos de Agua. The income from this project helps support the Sister Parish Program.

Betty has drawn up a list of new items she would like our delegation to scout out for future sales. When Kathy and Rosanne come back you can look for a new supply of leather goods, candles, wooden crosses and hand-painted necklaces.