

REFLECTIONS FROM THE PASTORAL TEAM IN EL SALVADOR

CELEBRATIONS OF DECEMBER

With the arrival of the Spanish invaders to our lands, the Missionaries also arrived that brought us the faith in Jesus.

To be able to transmit that faith in Jesus some did it in a violent way, abusing the authority of the leaders in those times. But the Christian missionaries such as Fray Bartholomew tried to transmit the faith without using violence, utilizing methods more attractive like the theater, and thus the shepherd's rise in order to announce the birth of Jesus.

TIME OF ADVENT:

In the month of December and in the framework of the liturgical time of advent, we in the Catholic Church have the tradition to celebrate the shepherds and the inns. In the inns we recall and reflect that Joseph and the Virgin Mary did not find room in the inn, and for that reason Jesus was born in a manger. The inns have a festive environment, they are celebrated between the families and traditional food is shared like tamales, sweet bread with coffee or chocolate.

OTHER CELEBRATIONS:

December 9 we celebrate the day of San Juan Diego, the first native canonized after passing for a series of difficulties for its canonization, as happens in our time with the process of Monsignor Romero, that for the town already known as "San Romero of America"; but has not yet been canonized.

December 12 we celebrate the festival of the "Patroness of America" Our Lady of Guadalupe, that recalls us our roots and the responsibility that we have to recover our identity and recall the 500 years that have passed when our ancestors were victims of the invasion of the Spanish and being enslaved and treated as animals. In 1531, 477 years ago, the history of the Church and the faith tell us that Our Lady of Guadalupe appears in Mexico to give a message of love to this poor town, passed through a native, Juan Diego, to whom she dignifies by calling him "Son" and that to all of us in our anguishes and sadness says, I am your "Compassionate Mother."

In all these festivals and celebrations the families meet in community to reflect and to share the faith with hope. We pray to God to fortify us and we thank him for all the goods received during all the year. With this spirit of preparation to live in a Christian way, especially during Christmas, we thank all the people, our brothers and sisters that offer us their brotherly support for our town.

Merry Christmas!

The Pastoral Team in Berlin

Kathy Mahler Commissioned in December 2008

On Sunday, December 7, 2008, Kathy Mahler was commissioned as Designated Mission Co-worker for El Salvador in a service at Highland Park Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa.

Kathy has been an integral and valued member of Compañeros and the International Mission Committee for many years. She ably served as the Don Justo Coffee coordinator for the past three years spending countless hours making certain that the shipment and distribution of coffee went as smoothly as possible. She also traveled to many churches in central Iowa to interpret the message and benefits of purchasing Don Justo Coffee. This past year, Kathy served as interim co-worker in El Salvador for six months.

The enthusiasm and passion she has shown for the mission and people of El Salvador will energize and enhance the awareness and projects of the mission immeasurably. We all wish her traveling mercies, Godspeed and much success!