



*O Jerusalem, rejoice  
Rise up to the heights.  
Behold the joy  
Your God is bringing you.*

**TO OUR FRIENDS WHO HAVE VISITED US AT THE CENTRO GUADALUPE  
AND HAVE BLESSED US WITH YOUR PRESENCE AMONG US:**

EVERY YEAR AS WINTER DARKNESS INCREASES and cold penetrates our very bones, we feel the temptation to close in on ourselves and look primarily after our own comfort. The prophet Isaiah, accompanying us during the Advent season, cries out: *Wake up! Listen! Sing with joy!* As we hear this invitation we want to respond and stay in communication with each of you who have visited our home at the Centro Guadalupe. You are always present in our thoughts, our memory, and our prayer.

Since the year 1976 when we first befriended the brothers of Weston Priory, we dreamed of a place where we could offer hospitality and welcome persons from the United States, Mexico and other countries who are working on behalf of peace, the dignity of human rights and justice for all.

The *Centro Guadalupe* (Guadalupe Center) has become a reality that has borne fruit with a sense of gratitude on behalf of both our communities as well as to the many groups of people who visit us.



We trust in the Spirit of God who has walked with us and continues to guide our steps. Even when the view on the horizon looms stormy we try to move forward convinced that the *Arco Iris*, the "Rainbow" of our covenant together, will in time always shine anew.

Each year we look forward to the brothers' visit as our friendship and love for one another continues to grow more deeply. We listen together to God's voice in the hopes and joys and sufferings of the poor and simple people, and we offer our faithful witness.

In the Benedictine tradition our charism is principally one of hospitality. Saint Benedict teaches us to open our heart to whomever comes to our door. In this spirit we continue to welcome groups of those seeking a place where to encounter God in the depth of their own person and life's journey.

DURING THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH we received several groups:

► A group came from Canada to work in solidarity with the community of Hueyapan. They work to help develop their agrarian projects with organic vegetable gardens, ecological toilets, composting, and more recently building an agricultural school for people who want to generate or improve their farming resources.



Sr. Teresa Razo

► A number of our Sisters who work with vocational promotion for our congregation spent time at the Center.

► We also offered hospitality to our Sisters as they made a retreat in the preparation of our General Chapter for our Congregation and elected a new leadership team led by Sister Teresa Razo as our new prioress.



Sisters meeting in General Chapter

► We also welcomed a group of local people who practice Transcendental Meditation together.

DURING APRIL, MAY AND JUNE we welcomed Father Thomas Ryan accompanied by a couple, Glen and Amata, both from New York State who visited the community of Lomas de Ahuatlán. They reviewed the scholarship program they offer to youth in need and other outreach programs with which they have assisted.



Unexpectedly in April, we had to replace the floor tiles of the big meeting room of the Center as the tiles suddenly began to break up.



Fr. Thomas, Amata and Glen, with Sr. Fidelina

After a couple years of study and supervised training, on April 28<sup>th</sup> our Sister Carolina Negrete received her Diploma for Hospice Care and Bereavement Accompaniment.



right - Sr. Carolina



Lutheran young adult group with the Centro Guadalupe Sisters

In May we received a group of young adults who, on global mission through the Evangelical Lutheran Church, had been working as volunteers in Mexico over the last nine months.

On May 22 we celebrated the 88<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of our congregation in the chapel of the Centro Guadalupe.

During the festive Eucharist, Benedictine Father Konrad Schaefer presiding, our Sister Marcela Galván renewed her temporary vows.



l to r - Sr. Reyna, Sr. Marcela, Fr. Konrad



Fr. Desire Afara with the Sisters of the Mother House and the Centro Guadalupe

In June, both the Sisters from the Mother House in Mexico City and the Centro Guadalupe communities made our retreat here in our home.

The retreat was guided by Father Desire Afara of the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Benedictine Sister Ana Luz of the nearby Monastery of Our Lady of Ahuatepec made a "desert experience retreat" at the Center. We also had the joy of welcoming our good neighbor and friend María Luisa with her extended family as they celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

DURING JULY, AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER we received guests from Nicaragua, the relatives of Father Pablo Sosa Álvarez, a Benedictine monk of Our Lady of The Angels Monastery in Cuernavaca. One of the family stayed for 3 months as a refugee awaiting his papers (visa) as a permanent resident in Mexico.



Construction and repairs on the Sisters' living quarters

During July, August and September, we had workers doing reconstruction in the sisters' living quarters. Our house had sustained some damage during last year's earthquake, and every time there are tremors the damage kept getting worse. The work lasted 3 months because the reconstruction took place in several stages.

September 18<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, we received a group from the First Congregational Church in Old Lyme, Connecticut, along with a couple from Massachusetts who had been friends for many years.



1<sup>st</sup> Congregational Church group with Sr. Reyna (center front)

DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER:

From October 25th to November 3<sup>rd</sup> we welcomed a group organized through John and Alice Scannell, from Portland, Oregon, for an experience around the celebration of the “Day of the Dead”.

During 2 weeks of November we had to suspend receiving groups because we needed to replace floor tiles on the patio outside the dining room.



The Portland-Oregon Group experiencing the celebration of the “Day of the Dead” with the Sisters of the Centro Guadalupe

Then we hosted the “*Encuentro de Madres Responsables*” (Encounter of Responsible Mothers)—a workshop for young mothers developing mothering skills.

In December we received a group from Seattle University organized by our friend Jeanette Rodriguez. For several years they have been coming to part-



The Seattle University Group at the Centro Guadalupe



A Christian Family Movement Group meeting

take of the celebrations around the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with the Mexican people.

Throughout the year we welcomed five groups of the “*Movimiento Familiar Cristiano*” (Christian Family Movement) and other small prayer groups for times of solitude, reflection and contemplation.

We are aware of the diverse International conflicts that threaten life in different ways: economic, political, social and religious. In addition, they all endanger human rights and the environment in ways affecting the whole planet. We feel these effects poignantly in Latin America.

Migration is a worldwide humanitarian crisis brought about by authoritarian policies and repression on the part of those in power. Because of the levels of destitution, injustice, despotism, violence and insecurity, whole families are forced to leave their countries in search of a better life. As they journey through our country we feel called to respond to their plight. We feel ashamed when they are mistreated; and we identify with their suffering as we demand our government’s caring attention to these brothers and sisters in exodus.

The Mexican Bishops Conference, as well as some concerned groups from other Christian churches have called emphatically for the full respect of the migrants’ human rights.

In Mexico we are in transition to a new government administration. People have great expectations for the new government. They dream and hope for a more participatory democracy where all the citizens are engaged. There has already been a consultation in which the incoming authorities have asked for people’s input on the proposed construction of a new airport on the outskirts of Mexico City. The economic elites had been opposed to this consultation because they had already invested money in the project before any decision was made by the general populace.

In October we had a celebration honoring the beatification of Archbishop Oscar Romero in the open chapel of the Cuernavaca Cathedral. There were also presentations about his life and anecdotes about him were shared.



A Migrant Caravan heading north

Also, Father Angel Sánchez Campos launched his new book about the implementation of the Vatican Council II in Latin America during the last 50 years. The book features the emergence of Church Base Communities, the Preferential Option for the Poor, and the *ground-breaking* Latin American Bishops' 1968 General Meeting in Medellín, Colombia.

We end this year 2018 with grateful hearts filled with hope. We feel God's presence in our life and in the life of our Latin American peoples who struggle and hope for justice, dreaming that one day they will truly live in their reality as sons and daughters of God.

We remain grateful to all of you for the gift of your friendship and your support. We know it is the fruit of your labor that you generously share with us and with those who live in need.

Christmas is a time to experience God's tenderness in our human flesh. By letting go of a divine prerogative, letting go of all greatness, God became one of us in Jesus. He experienced our limitations and felt the need to learn and grow, opening himself in hope to live as a full human being. He roused our hope and has given us life.

**Merry Christmas to each and all! May peace and joy fill your hearts as we begin a New Year!**



## Your Sisters

*Marcela, Joaquina, Rosario, Raquel, Carolina,  
Ascensión, Blanca, Guadalupe, Reyna, Fidelina, and Carmelita*

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