



Christmas Greetings

from your Sisters
at the Guadalupe Center
Cuernavaca, Mexico

To our dear friends who have honored us and extended their presence to us at the Guadalupe Center in Cuernavaca:

With joy and hope we send you our greetings and best wishes, hoping that this Christmas celebration and the New Year 2012 may bring many blessings and Good News for each of you.

*The people who were walking in darkness
have seen a great light.
A light has dawned on those who were living
in the land of the shadow of death.*

Is.9:1

In this time of global upheaval, instability, and increasing insecurity, and as Christmas approaches, the memory of a wonderful and priceless gift that we have been given fills us with joy and hope: God has become one with our humanity and shares our weaknesses. For those who open their eyes and believe, they will always encounter a new and deeper reality. Jesus saw life enveloped in “grace and truth.” He has opened his eyes to discover a light that lay at the heart of all existence: the grace and truth that God fills everything.

In Mexico, in face of the reality of the current turmoil and violence, charismatic persons have emerged who will risk everything for a Mexico that lives in peace and with justice. One such person is the poet and writer, Javier Sicilia, who has suffered in his own flesh and blood the assassination of his son, together with six other students and another woman in Temixco, in this state of Morelos, Mexico.

His suffering filled him with courage to denounce the impunity and corruption of government authorities and to search for alternative strategies that would turn around and stop the criminality of our society. Many people, who normally would remain silent out of fear of reprisals, united together to form a campaign for justice or peace with dignity that has extended to the whole country and even into Central America. Although we have not yet been able to see the full light of day, certainly little rays of light are emerging along the path. And we know that we are not walking alone; we are united with one another!



An Additional Ray of Light

Once a week we go to visit the Women's Sewing Cooperative in Rubén Jaramillo. This group of women has remained together for more than 20 years. During some of this time they have walked alone, but on other occasions one or another of our Sisters has accompanied them in their joys and sorrows, their successes and failures. The strength of the Word of God in their community has sustained the women on this journey. Weekly they come together as they bring back the tee-shirts and other craft items that they have embroidered over the week and to discuss their family and neighborhood problems. At the end of each meeting they pray with a text of Scripture. Then, taking turns, three of the women each week prepare some food for all to share as part of their celebration.

Juanita, a woman in the Cooperative, has recently been widowed with the death of her husband in a terrible accident. She has been struggling alone to try to meet the tuition costs for the education of her youngest son, Milton. He had just begun his studies at the preparatory school. Reluctantly she had to decide to leave the Cooperative in order to look for other work that will bring in more income to meet this need.

Corinne and Linda, two of our friends from the United States, have come several times as volunteers to the Guadalupe Center. For a number of years they have known and supported the work of the Women's Cooperative. On a recent visit Linda and Corrine became aware of Juanita's struggle as the women shared her plight and absence from the Cooperative. Linda and Corrine offered to assist Juanita to help pay the high school tuition for her youngest son so that she could remain in the Cooperative and continue to participate and receive support from this group of women. Juanita gratefully accepted this proposal and gave thanks to God for the goodness of these friends and the many other persons who have shown their solidarity with her in these very trying and challenging circumstances.

Welcoming Guests

As we extend hospitality at the Guadalupe Center, we experience more and more how each guest in their person and each group together brings a blessing that enriches our community life.

We continue offering groups from North America and Mexico a hospitable space to grow in a deeper awareness of God's presence and an opportunity to touch the rich bounty of hope and culture that our people exude even amidst their poverty.

People find that these realities have a profound impact on their lives. Many say: "Now I am truly touching poverty," and they want to pursue a more informed understanding of the root causes of the injustice they are witnessing. As they enter into our life in prayer, work and service to others, into the silence in the early morning and the sharing of life during the day, they find resources that truly nourish them. This is Good News - what they have seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears - that they, in turn, share with their families and friends.



In August, we received for a day of reflection a group of 9 young Lutheran volunteers from the United States who came to offer social service and reciprocally to learn the culture, customs, and language of our people. They were here for about a year working in different projects with the poor. In spite of the insecurity they felt because they were not fluent in the language, they risked their lives for the good of the poor. We Sisters were very moved and grateful for these young people.

Mexican Groups

During the year at the Guadalupe Center we received several groups from the base Christian communities and local parishes who came for a day of reflection and retreat. There were also other large groups involved in communi-

ty-building and in service to the poor who came for more extended times of study, reflection and exchange.

One group works to assist youth during this time when young Mexicans are experiencing limited opportunities in their lives. A couple, Andrea and Toño, brought together this group of teachers educating on a secondary-school level for a workshop entitled in Spanish, “Construye T”, i.e., “Develop Yourself.” The objective is to help young adults and adolescents discover within themselves the tools and resources that can foster mutual cooperation in their family life and social environment.

Another group came under auspices an organization called World Vision. The majority of this group was young people who came for a spiritual retreat, guided by a Baptist pastor. They were hoping to renew a spirit of enthusiasm for their mission on behalf of other children and young people in the poorest of places in the States of Guerrero and Oaxaca, Mexico.



During the month of June we received for a time of retreat 24 Religious Sisters participating in the School of Formation of the National Conference of Mexican Religious (CIRM). Religious life today is continually in search of renewal and prophetic witness attuned to this historical moment.

For a few days in mid-October we hosted a national network of persons working to build respect for Human Rights in many different parts of Mexico. There were 62 participants in the exchange. They are persons trying to create a culture that understands, values and embraces the rights of all persons and all created reality so that we can all become who and what we are all called to be.

Sisters in our Congregation

At various times during the year four different groups of our Sisters came to make their retreat at the Guadalupe Center: at Easter time; in the month of

July; in September when a group of our older Sisters were with us; and soon another group will be coming during Christmas season.

It is so wonderful to have groups of our Sisters with us. Their presence provides a space for all of us to pray together during days of their retreat, and then after the retreat to gather together to talk and share our experiences with one another. This strengthens and animates us in the vision of our common life and mission as Sisters.



It should be noted that we are in the process of converting some of the stairwalkways at the Center into ramp-like walkways, eliminating the stairs. This is becoming more important especially for our older Sisters, but we sense it will also be a service for our many of our other guests.

Our Community

The daily rhythm of our life continues pulsing with moments of prayer, work, study and rest. Each Sister, according to her gifts, is encouraged to strengthen her relationship with her Sisters in community as we search together for the presence of the God who has called us together personally and as community.



We thank all of you for your friendship and for the love shown to us in so many ways, both during the time you visited us and during these ensuing

years. Your interest in our life and the mission of the Guadalupe Center means a lot to us. Your spirit animates our hospitality for others.

Also, we are sincerely grateful to those persons who have sent donations as a sign of solidarity and encouragement for our work at the Center. May God continue blessing you as well.

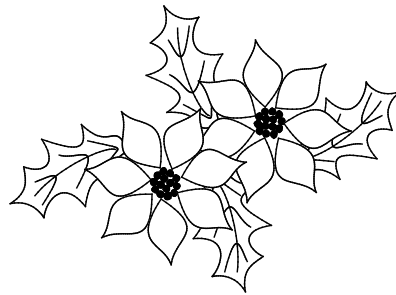
In prayer and love we are present to you in this Christmas season and throughout the New Year 2012.

Your Sisters and friends at the Guadalupe Center,

Sisters Fidelina, Rosario, Joaquina, Ascensión, María Rosa, Guadalupe, Raquel, Reyna, Roberta, María del Carmen, and Caridad

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In recent years the number of groups from the United States and Canada participating in the Faith and Hospitality Experience at the Guadalupe Center has diminished for various reasons. However, the hospitality of the Sisters continues energetically as you see in their newsletter.

If you would like to organize a group (large or small) to go to Mexico, you can access further information on our website www.westonpriory.org/mexico or drop a note to us at the above address.

In addition, if there are ways that you would like to stay in touch with the Sisters' outreach and participate in their mission at the Center, you can contact the Sisters through us. Together we will keep you informed about their work and the groups, especially from Mexico, who are availing themselves of the life and hospitality of the Center.

Your interest and contributions certainly enable the Sisters to offer this ministry to many who would not have this wonderful opportunity otherwise.

thank you sincerely,
the brothers