
VIM EL SALVADOR

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Renewed Lay Ministry.

The Diocese of El Salvador, like all of the Church has its strength and vitality in the ministry of the laity. Over the past years El Salvador has been working to equip all of the Church for service. Bishop Martín Barahona, who celebrated the tenth anniversary of his episcopal ordination on Maundy Thursday, helped bring to life an innovative programme to support and challenge women in ministry. This programme has brought support to many women in their individual spiritual growth and has enabled many of them to take leadership roles in the Parish Council, education programmes, pastoral ministry, and liturgical leadership in the congregations.

The youth of the Diocese also have a strong co-ordinated programme of support at the parish and diocesan levels with social activities, leadership programmes and work projects to help the young people live-out their Christian commitment. The Diocese has also begun work in support of men in ministry. Not unlike Canada, women generally have been more active than men in the life of the Church. The men's programme is strengthening the sense of fellowship amongst men from various parishes and providing training and educational support. A Cursillo of Christianity is set for August 2002 which is proposed to be a training event for further strengthening this important ministry of men.

The Diocese, like many in Latin America, has a serious shortage of ordained ministers. There are many reasons for this shortage; amongst them is the absence of local theological schools. As well, many of the most highly trained clergy are called to the important ministry that the Episcopal Church USA is performing with its sizeable Central

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THE RIGHT REVEREND MARTÍN BARAHONA celebrated the 10th anniversary of his consecration and installation as Bishop of El Salvador on Maundy Thursday. The Diocese began shortly before the civil war arose here. During the war only one Anglican priest remained in the country. Martín Barahona, elected bishop following Peace Accords in 1992, faced the task of starting anew. The work has suffered serious complications due to earthquakes of 2001. †

HOLY WEEK: PROCESSIONS AND VIGILS

Holy Week in the Anglican Church of El Salvador in many ways is similar to our festivities in Canada. For example, at Iglesia Santísima Trinidad (Holy Trinity) there is a procession and liturgy with palms before the service on Passion Sunday. In this case the palms are not ordered from afar. Each church member finds their own and brings them, sometimes bound in garlands with flowers, to the church. Members of the Youth Group read the Passion story in the service. A Eucharist with washing of feet occurs on Maundy Thursday, and an outdoors *Vía Crucis* on Good Friday with a Liturgy of the Word following in the church.

On Holy Saturday the traditional vigil begins with the lighting of the fire outside the church followed by readings and meditations on the biblical history of the faith. The vigil continues through the night with singing, skits, and even games. The service culminates with the celebration of the Resurrection with a Eucharist at 4 a.m. This year we had the additional festivity of the baptism of a 14-year-old young woman, Karla Hernández.

Fortunately, the 4 am Easter service is the only one, or the priest (Kay) might have had difficulty appearing awake!

At the diocesan level, the clergy renew their vows at the "cathedral" church of San Juan Evangelista near the diocesan centre.

A perspective of some observers about Latin America there is more enthusiasm about Holy Week and the Passion than there is for Easter and the Resurrection. A scholar named John Mackay wrote in the 1950's a book titled *El Otro Cristo*

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Diocese Intensifies Human Rights Work

The civil war ended ten years ago in El Salvador. While most Salvadorians are happy that the conflicts that caused much killing and destruction of social life and property has come to an end a large portion of the population is acutely aware that many of the causes of the conflict have not been addressed.

A very public example of the sort of repression that is returning to El Salvador was displayed during a recent bus strike. An opposition deputy of the FMLN was arrested for supporting the strikers. The chief of police later admitted that he had no evidence for his action.

This is only one example of many problems facing the police and justice system of this country. Recently over one hundred attorneys and several judges were found to have law degrees that had not been earned.

This system is not able to defend the civil rights of the population. Many persons have suffered abuse of their rights. Bishop Barahona has made response to many individual cases both in El Salvador and in the USA. Now, the Diocese along with a US Episcopal Church based group (CRISTOSAL) has made a commitment to establishing an ongoing programme of support for human rights work. †



L-R Keith Tyler and the Rev. Randy Dales talk with César Hernández in ElCongo.

NEW HAMPSHIRE FOLK ENCOUNTER EL SALVADOR

Three Episcopalians and one Methodist from New Hampshire visited the Diocese of El Salvador during the last week of February: the Rev. Randy Dales, son Keith Tyler, Keith's schoolmate Erin Maroni, and a teacher from their secondary school, Robert Parker. Both young people were working on projects they had developed through the school program.

Visitation procedure in the Diocese of El Salvador includes different clergy hosting the visitors and showing them the work in different areas of the diocese.

For example, one day Ed took the group to Santa Ana to see San Rafael Church where Caesar Hernández serves. The church has an outreach station at El Congo where the people are very poor and many cannot read or write. San Rafael offers a literacy program and a preschool for small children as well as support in members' growing faith. Above El Congo is another property of the diocese where new houses will be built for those who suffered losses during the two earthquakes earlier this year.

On the Saturday Kay took the group to San Martín to meet with members of the Santísima Trinidad youth group. The discussion focused on how young people in El Salvador see possibilities for their futures. Most of the young people reported that their parents had perhaps Grade 2, 3, or 4 education, and that they have had the good fortune of the Government School in their *colonia* (neighbourhood). All expect to complete bachilleratos (high school diplomas) if they have not already done so. The problem is that with only a high school diploma, it is almost impossible to find employment that pays even subsistence wages. Options might include working in a *maquila*, one of the clothing manufacturing factories notorious for poor wages and working conditions. For men, there are possibilities in farm work – “cutting cane”. This is seasonal, although there are



View of Mt. Izalco from Diocesan Housing Programme

several “seasons” during the year. Along with coffee, sugar cane is a major product of El Salvador.

We talked about the need for education beyond high school. Several young people have plans to attend one of the technical universities in San Salvador. Others feel the need for university or technical/vocational training, but many do not have the means to pursue these possibilities. Without more education, the young people feel they will have little chance of improving their situation. This situation exists among all the youth of the Anglican Church of El Salvador. Really bright children with high grade-point averages can often obtain scholarships; however, for the majority of young adults, other ways must be found.

During the discussion, the young people discovered that the visitors had not yet had the opportunity to eat the Salvadorian national food: *pupusas* (poo-POOH-suhs). The youths arranged for a local pupusa maker to have the Americans in for a demonstration. Cameras clicked as, with deft fingers, the woman shaped corn tortillas. She made an indentation in the center of each tortilla and added a large dab of cheese, which she then enclosed in the dough. She cooked the *pupusas* on a large homemade grill. While we were watching, different people from the neighbourhood came to buy some of her products.

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Mountain retreat

Jóvenes go camping

Religious holidays, like Holy Week are vacation time in El Salvador. 22 young people with sponsors: Irma and the Rev. David Alvadado and Ed Schmitt went to Colima, a newly established forest reserve for a programme to build community. Along with worship and Bible study youth engaged in recreation, hiking and swimming, the latter a necessity in a country in which Holy week is the hottest time of the year.

For 3 days, notwithstanding heat and insects, the young people explored what their faith means in their daily lives in El Salvador.

On the final evening the young people presented the results of their small group reflections in a celebration of the VIA CRUCIS, Way of the Cross, climbing the side of the mountain and presenting in dramatic form their reflections on the theme of each station. First, group members enacted the theme and then shared their ideas on the meaning of that tradition in their current experience.

To provide the security unfortunately necessary in El Salvador and education, two forest rangers always stayed with the group. The rangers are members of the local community around Colima and provided information about both ecology of the forest and the reserve society. ✦

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American and other Spanish-speaking communities

Rather than being daunted by the shortage of clergy the Diocese is responding with confidence and hope to the opportunity to re-vision ministry models. As part of this change Ed Schmitt will be spending more of his training time in the area development of lay ministry. ✦



On the same date that Canadian women received the right to vote (March 24, 1918), Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated 62 years later in El Salvador while seeking human dignity for the poor.

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Español or The Other Spanish Christ. According to scholar Daniel Schipani, Mackay believed that the shape of the faith in Spain and after in Latin America evolved from the Spanish experience of subjugation by the Moors in the 1500s. Mackay believed that the consciousness of the memory of their own oppression were causes for the violent overtaking of indigenous groups in Latin America. He called the faith in the Spanish colonies a faith centering on death rather than life.

Another factor might be the hopelessness born of grinding poverty that the majority of indigenous people have experienced – in conjunction with the teaching that life in heaven is the focus for one's longings, and the present suffering, rather than that of oppression, is the consequence of personal sinfulness. ✦

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After the demonstration, we visited homes of several families of Santísima Trinidad. Each family offered a genuine welcome and hospitality. At the final house, the dining table was set with plates and we had a royal feast of pupusas – along with the national drink, Coca-cola. (Actually, the truly indigenous national drink is atol, made of corn and sweeteners such as honey. A recent change in Salvadorian culture has been the increase in competition by Pepsi-Cola!

Ed also escorted the group to Cuilapa (San Pedro y San Pablo), the nearby Maizal (more land for houses), and Izalco (also with land for houses). The group also visited Acajutla, one of El Salvador's main ports for freight ships. ✦



**¡CRISTO
HA RESUCITADO!**

PHILIP WADHAM VISITS SCHMITTS IN EL SALVADOR

Volunteers in Mission workers being able to spend time with a national staff person and share about their work is an immense support that comes from the Anglican Church of Canada.

In the week prior to Holy Week, we received a visit from Philip Wadham, who, for our support but also in your behalf came to see the work of the Anglican Church in El Salvador.

Philip accompanied Kay and Ed for several days, attending the activities of Santísima Trinidad, the small church in San Martín where Kay works. Philip took active part in the English Class for young people, and also in the children's class of Bible study.

Philip also visited Cuilapa where Ed helps out on weekends at Iglesia San Pedro y San Pablo. Philip attended several meetings of the parish, visited the new house in the village that an NGO, with some support from the Anglican Church, has recently completed. He also saw two sites where the Anglican Church is in the process of developing --- new houses, hopefully to be started in November of this year -- one in Maisal (near the border with Guatemala), and the other in the small town of Izalco.

The third day Philip and Kay visited the church of San Andrés. Here there is a school for very poor children who, in shiningly clean and pressed uniforms stood to greet them when they entered each class. The school includes children from preschool through grade six. San Andrés is rebuilding the church part of their building. An attractive new façade of sandstone, mission style, with a bell over the entrance, will signal to passers-by that this building is indeed a church into which they are invited. The Rev. David Alvarado,

priest at San Andrés, dreams for the church, and talked of some problems he faces in the work. For instance, the school employs five teachers and the church must continue to pay them. As well, he gives pastoral support to new mission in the hills of Usulután. Each round trip costs \$20 U. S. for gas. In El Salvador, transportation for priests is not reimbursed but must come out of the priest's own pocket.

The support we receive from the Anglican Church of Canada, and in particular from Jill Cruse, the VIM Coordinator, Clementina Thomas, VIM Office staff person, and from Philip Wadham, the Latin American Desk person for Partners in Mission, continues to strengthen us for the work that we do in El Salvador. ✦



AFTERMATH OF EARTHQUAKES over a year ago in El Salvador continues: Legislative Assembly accepts a \$270 million US loan from World Bank for 3 years. Conditions of the loan require rebuilding of social and health services to levels *prior* to quakes, including rebuilding 7 hospitals, 106 schools, and 307 classrooms still at high risk. Method of repayment remains unclear.



Members of the Church in Cuilapa who came out to meet Philip Wadham

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