A Ministry of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus







Fall 2015

FIAT *Happenings*

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful year we have had! The water project completed by our volunteers with the collaborative support of Engineers Without Borders and the Jenkintown Rotary was a huge success. More water is being distributed to families in Las Delicias, and electric bills are lower due to the increased efficiency of the new tank and variable frequency drive control panel.

The dream to purchase a piece of land to build 12 homes for single mothers was initiated this past January. We anticipate this project will take 4 years to complete. We look forward to organizing programs to help give these women the tools needed for economic empowerment along with psychological support to build on their self-esteem and confidence.

The computer lab in Ciudad Arce is up and running, and the teachers are in the process of implementing an interscholastic computer connection between their students and the students in the Handmaids' school in Japan. Through the continuing support of our donors, we have purchased more desks and school books for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades in Ciudad Arce and hope to finish with the final grades next year.



In the true spirit of a Handmaid, Sister Gloria Petrone is now answering the need of her Congregation to go to a new mission where she will continue her good work with the poor as well as be the leader of her local community. For the past 11 years Sister has been committed to working for the children and people of El Salvador. Her great love for El Salvador will continue and will never be forgotten. Project FIAT thanks Sister Gloria for all her years of service and dedication and wishes her continued success in her new position in Miami.

We welcome the interim Director of Project FIAT, Sister Belen Escauriaza. Sister Belen has worked with the Project FIAT volunteers in El Salvador for the past five years and has recently been named USA Provincial Superior of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Sister Belen enjoys capturing moments of "Faith In Action" through the lens of her camera and loves working side by side with our volunteers. The vision of Project FIAT remains the same; and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we look forward to another wonderful and exciting year.



Lynette Kyle Mission Coordinator



"Mission is a passion for Jesus and at the same time a passion for his people."
Pope Francis







Projects Completed






The above from left to right were completed in Ciudad Arce: A computer lab, a retaining wall, two bathroom stalls for kindergarten and 9th graders, paved area for driveway and playground.

Projects in Motion



Sponsor a Child Program:

For a cost of $60 a year a child is given an opportunity to go to school. Shoes, uniforms, book bags and school supplies are provided for the students as they prepare for the school year. High school students receive $300 which covers the cost of transportation for a year. This year we have 236 children being sponsored to go to school in 4 different villages, and 40 of those are high school and college students.



The Elderly Program:

Five days a week, seniors arrive to the community center from long distances with the help of their canes, crutches and walkers, to enjoy a welcomed meal. Those who attend carry meals back home to friends and loved ones unable to walk the long distance to the center. There are 26 senior citizens that participate in this program.

Food For Thought Program:

Thanks to the support of Project FIAT volunteers and to the mothers in Las Delicias who prepare the food, we are able to provide one balanced meal a day for 30 children identified as being most in need. Through the nourishment of this one meal, students are more alert and have increased energy to focus on their education.





Sr. Elizabeth McCoy Scholarship Program:

This scholarship is dedicated to furthering the education of teachers. Professor Margarita Quijano has a Masters in Education and is well known among her students for her creative and animated teaching style. The teachers in Ciudad Arce and Las Delicias have implemented what they have learned in these classes and are looking forward towards future classes with Margarita.

Tutoring and Literacy Programs:

Tutoring is provided by Professors Quijano and Pleitez for students needing reinforcement in their studies. This enables them to keep up in their class assignments and enhances their self-esteem.

The Literacy program in Las Delicias, lead by Professor Cardona, has already shown results. Mothers are able to read stories to their children and confidently use their math skills when going to the store to purchase items. A whole new world has opened up for them.



May 23, 2015 - Beatification of Msgr. Oscar Romero

At 7:00 o'clock a.m. on May 23, 2015, Lynette Kyle, Sister Belen Escauriaza and I, along with our friends- a Canadian couple, a Nigerian priest and two Salvadoran boys- left our Volunteer House to attend the Beatification of Msgr. Oscar Romero. Our excitement couldn't have been greater. We were filled with joy, anticipation and gratitude as well as with some fear. The ceremony was scheduled for 10:00 o'clock a.m., but people had been flocking to the streets from the previous day, braving torrential rains overnight to secure a seat.



The event took place at the Savior of the World Plaza, turned open air cathedral, in San Salvador. Pilgrims from as far away as Singapore, USA, Europe and the Americas, as well as Salvadorans from every small village, wanted to celebrate what many people thought was a long overdue recognition of a Salvadoran martyr. Four Latin American presidents, six cardinals, hundreds of bishops and thousands of priests were among the immense crowd of over 300,000 that gathered in peace and more than filled the square. From where we were we could hardly see the altar, but luckily we could watch everything on a gigantic screen broadcasting the event.

Everywhere people were carrying banners and chanting hip hop songs: "Romero, amigo, el pueblo esta contigo" ("Romero, friend, the people are with you"). Flowers, music, stories, posters, T-shirts, murals, vendors of all kinds and great neighborliness took care of our waiting time. I was surprised, minutes before 10:00 o'clock, to see the long line of clergy filing in for the Mass. They wore some form of red vestment to signify martyrdom, and in their stoles were emblazoned Romero's episcopal motto: "Sentir con la Iglesia" ("Feel/Think in and with the Church").

"Blessed Romero is another brilliant star that belongs to the sanctity of the Church of the Americas," said Cardinal Angelo Amato, the Vatican envoy to preside at the Beatification ceremony. While those who killed him have died or are now forgotten "the memory of Romero continues to live in the poor and the marginalized," Amato said. In a message sent on the occasion of the Beatification, Pope Francis reminded us that Archbishop Romero "built the peace with the power of love, gave testimony of the faith with his life...In a time of difficulty in El Salvador he knew how to guide, defend and protect his flock, remaining faithful to the Gospel and in communion with the Church."

In a glass case, eight deacons carried to the altar Romero's bloodied shirt, now a relic so reverently processed into the liturgy. An assassin's single bullet took his life on March 24, 1980 as he was celebrating the Eucharist. The day before his death, Romero made an impassioned appeal to the military and the police: "In the name of God, in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I implore you, I beg you: STOP the repression." One of the offertory gifts brought to the altar during the Mass was the book *De la Locura a la Esperanza* (*From Madness to Hope*), a document that summarized the Peace Accords' findings that ended El Salvador's 12-year old war. My head was spinning. What would Romero, the bishop of peace and of the poor, say to his beloved country, 35 years after his death, when he sees it still submerged in deadly violence?

A remarkable incident took place just as Cardinal Amato read the decree proclaiming Oscar Arnulfo Romero Blessed: A circular rainbow formed around the sun. Really? Yes! It was there for a while. It was there for all to see. What could it mean? I read it as a message of Peace.



A Peace that engages in truth telling and denouncing of evil. A Peace that loves even the enemy. Or as Pope Francis says, "a Peace that is the fruit of a poor church for the poor."

The Challenge remains!

Sister Sagrario Núñez, acj

What Motivates you to volunteer?

"My life is amazingly blessed and I want to give my time, energy and love of God to those who may not know our Lord and are less fortunate. I want to get out of my comfort zone, extend myself, and do what I can to make a difference."



"This will be our 3rd trip as a family, and the past experiences have truly been life changing. It has helped us refocus our motivation to be more in line with Catholic Social Teaching-walking alongside our fellow man, building relationships, and offering hope and friendship."

"I want to take some time to give back to others and to appreciate all the good things in my life."

"I am blessed with gifts and talents from God, and I have the means to use and share these gifts for the common good."

All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

2016 Project Fiat trip dates

January 2-9	May 21-28
January 9-16	May 30-June 7
January 23-30	June 9-17
March 5-12	June 19-27
March 12-19	June 29-July 7
March 19-26	July 9-July 17
	July 18-27





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