

Fall 2009

# FIAT Happenings



Dear Friends of the Missions,

Looking back over the past year, I am filled with awe and wonder at the marvels all of you have been part of in El Salvador. Through prayers, contributions and hard work we have seen the library finally reach the finishing point. The October groups finished the floor. Now all is ready for the dedication. It will be called the FIAT Library and will be dedicated to all the people who dug holes, put in electrical wires, worked with the rebar, mixed cement, secured cinder blocks, painted and did all the other work necessary to construct the library. In addition, we also bought books and book stands. This place will still be standing long after we are gone, and we can move on knowing that we have contributed to the education and development of the children of Las Delicias. Congratulations! (We owe special thanks to a wonderful doctor from Canada, Dr. Priest, who contributed the major part of the money to build the library.)

**"For I was hungry  
and you gave me  
food..."**



**...I was thirsty  
and you gave  
me drink...**

The lunch program, which you support, continues to provide nourishment for the children and enables them to study better in school. Last year we paid for the entire year of lunches, which cost four thousand dollars. Maryknoll magazine has a very nice article on the program; however, your support was inadvertently omitted in the publication. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who made this possible.

As we enter into our 6th year, we continue to give thanks to God for the wondrous works He has done through you. The program is actively being molded by God's hands and growing into something that we have never dreamed possible. We continue to pray in our daily Eucharist that God bless each and everyone of you.

Sister Gloria Petrone acj

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*  
Mahatma Gandhi

## Receiving the Day with Love in El Salvador

They say that there are moments you remember all your life. During my trip to El Salvador with my sister, I encountered more of these moments than I ever thought possible. I experienced some moments of intense joy and others of unbelievable sadness that motivates me to make a difference in the world in whatever way I am able.

El Salvador and its resilient people called me to live al-

**We communicated  
mostly through  
smiles**

ways with the best part of my spirit, just as they do. One day we were playing with some children at the orphanage that FIAT is associated with. A sign that was posted on a tree said, "Recibe esta día con amor." **Receive this day with love.** To see firsthand that this attitude is so alive in the midst of suffering in all of its devastating forms--loneliness, hunger for food, hunger for love, physical, mental, and spiritual emptiness--is a miracle.

## *Receiving the Day with Love in El Salvador (Continued)*



*...a stranger and you  
welcomed me...*

The children at Las Delicias--the village where FIAT volunteers spend most of their time--changed

my whole world. Not a day goes by when I don't think of their beautiful faces, their radiant smiles, and their hopeful spirits. I don't speak fluent Spanish, but I managed to communicate with the children throughout the ten days I spent with them. We communicated mostly through smiles! What amazed me most was how content the children were playing UNO ten times in a row, coloring pictures for hours, or just sitting in the shade of a tree together with me. No matter what we did, they were just happy to have companionship.

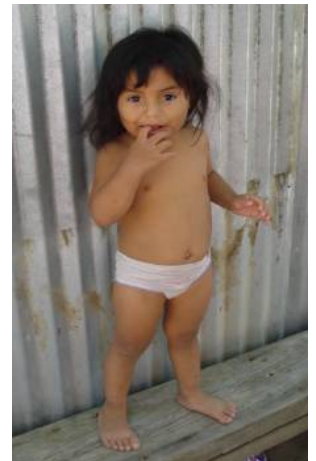
Enrique, Yaneth, Sujey, Carolina, Kevin, Hiromi. These are just a few of the names of my brothers and sisters that I have left behind for the summer. But I am already planning my return trip next summer. I can't stay away now that I have had the experience of serving in the small way I can.

Sister Gloria is now a personal hero of mine: I am speechless when I try to describe her commitment to her tasks and unfailing love for the people of El Salvador. She is an angel!

On the last day at Las Delicias, the children wrote little notes for my sister and me. We have all of their notes and artwork hung on our bedroom door, as a constant reminder of the kind of people we need to be. The children wrote things like, "Whenever I think of your beautiful smiles, I will be happy," and "It pains me to see you go, but I will dream about you every night." The children and their lives are constantly on my mind. I was blessed with their presence in my life this summer, and I am eager to go back next year to try to begin to give back that blessing.

*Charlotte Hulme  
Alma, Michigan*

*...naked and  
you clothed me...*



## *A CRY FOR PEACE*

*by Mehul Gandhi  
Villanova University*

*Looking in their eyes you can see the pain and struggle  
You can see the many years of frustration and trouble  
You can feel their hearts crying out for hope  
And you begin to wonder, how do they manage to cope  
What with all the repression and greed surrounding their world  
The destruction and murder that have left them unfurled  
The countless assassinations of innocent people and priests  
You hope that this anger and violence will cease  
And you can only wish for time to stand still  
So that they can just have one moment that's peaceful and tranquil  
But just like the people, you got to keep your faith alive  
Believe too that justice and freedom...will survive*

# VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

In the future I am hoping that my major contributions such as voting and educating myself on international injustices will motivate me to work towards change for the people of El Salvador and others.

*Tara Martin*



Mural by  
Rev. Richard Camuli OSA  
Villanova

I hope that the people we met realize their true potential and are given the opportunity to better themselves in an unjust environment. Throughout my years at Villanova I have vowed to make justice a priority in my life and to understand the reality behind the conditions and structures that exist within society. Experiencing what I saw in El Salvador is just the beginning of a life long journey of understanding truth in our world. Living in solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world is something that will change you forever. I cannot think of any better way to end my Villanova career than by spending two weeks living in solidarity with our friends in El Salvador.

*Ameer Reyad*

I have an enormous amount of respect for the people of El Salvador, who are exposed to so much violence and corruption. However, in spite of this, they continue to have hope and optimism for their future regardless of how long it may take for change to occur. They deserve far more than they receive, and they will forever have a place in my heart and in my thoughts.

*Hallie Guardo*



## *An Unforgettable Experience In Zaragoza*

During my trip to El Salvador, I witnessed poverty that infiltrated many levels of society. Entire villages were reduced to bare necessities at best, lack of food and clothing at worst. Even in the midst of such abject poverty, El Salvador remains a beautiful country with wonderful citizens who care for and appreciate visitors. The people may have been underfed and living in unsanitary conditions, but their spirit and sense of community was not battered.

I will always remember the appreciation of the adults who received clothing and food to give to their families and the genuine joy of the children who were shown love and compassion. We were able to provide food, clothing, and other items to hundreds of people, but thousands more remain in dire need of help. Those, whom we were able to help, have left a significant impact on me. While these people are deeply entrenched into material poverty, their lives are filled with joy, love, and hope. On the frequent occasion when we would pass a dirty child on the street who looked downcast and

hopeless, a simple smile and wave would result in the child's entire face lighting up. It was quite apparent that the children and residents of El Salvador respond greatly to the smallest gestures of kindness.

Being back in the states, the disconnect between our country and El Salvador is ample and baffling. Although I am happy to be home, I already miss the country of El Salvador and the people who live there. I will never forget what I found on this mission trip, and I cannot wait to return.

*Joseph Monardo  
Atlanta*



*...sick and you cared for me...*

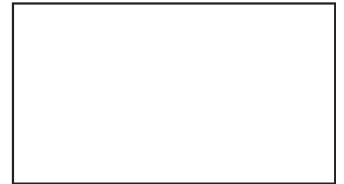


*...in prison and you visited me...*



*... Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."  
Matthew 25: 35-37*

HANDMAIDS OF THE SACRED  
HEART OF JESUS  
MISSION CENTER  
1242 SOUTH BROAD STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19146-3119



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*All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.  
Please remember us in your will.*

**PROJECT FIAT  
2010 TRIP DATES**

**December 26-Jan 2      May 29-June 5**  
**Jan 2-9                      June 6-14**  
**Jan 9-16                     June 15-23**  
**Jan 16-23                    June 24 - July 2**  
**Feb 27-March 6            July 5-13**  
**March 6-13                 July 14-22**  
**May 22-29                 July 23-31**



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