

“Lord, That I May See...”

Brother Richard

Tabasco is not just a spicy *chile* sauce for food, but a state in southern Mexico that has been in the news in recent months. It was devastated by torrential rains off the Gulf of Mexico which flooded 80% of the landmass of the state. There has been widespread loss of homes, fields and crops, as well as lives.

Here in Vermont, as well as in much of the northeast of our country, the backbone of our dairy industry has relied on young people who migrated in search of work, many coming from the state of Tabasco. We have had the privilege, visiting these farms, to meet several of these young people and, in turn, to offer them the hospitality of our home and prayer.

We have received many heart-felt questions over the years: “What can we do for these young people?” “How can we help the people of Mexico through the exchange that the Weston community has with the Mexican Benedictine Sisters?” “Can we go to Mexico and work with them?”

These are important questions, and they are not easily answered. Yet, for us brothers, we have learned in our monastic life that the most important starting place is *allowing our hearts to be opened and widened by others* who are ultimately our sisters and brothers. Taking the risk to see through the eyes and hearts of others in our world brings new and deeper insight as to what we can really do. Without this opening of our hearts and seeing through the eyes of another, we tend to give our own pre-conceived responses.

The Gospels relate how Jesus walked the roadways of his society and the world of his day with many different groups of people. He sat at table with them and shared in the little bit they had to offer, only to discover together an abundant banquet. When they cried out to see or to hear or to walk again, he discovered in them such great faith that it healed them. They were willing to risk all to find the presence and face of the *Other*/the others.

*Emmanuel-
God with us*

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And for Jesus, it was not a solitary search. He continually invited friends to share this journey and search with him.

This has been a continuing challenge to us as a community of brothers—to see with each other’s eyes, and hear with each other’s ears, and to walk with each other’s guidance. When we allow our hearts to be touched, when we let our fears fall away, and let go of having to do something significant, our simple presence to others brings their response to our questions. This does not follow the logic of today’s culture and society, that tells us always to “do;” but it is an initial step on a journey of faith that *opens us* to be led by another along the way.

The experience with our Mexican Sisters has opened this way for us. It has been an important experience for many people over the years. And although persons may begin this journey alone, they soon meet others searching just like them; and the experience can become even richer when a group of friends pursue this journey together.

This is our Christmas journey to a poor stable. Surprisingly, we encounter light and song on this pilgrimage, and are led to return home by a different way. It is such an important direction for our world today: God emptying God’s own heart, so that it can be filled with love for us all. This is the greatest gift we can give to each other. It brings such hope to persons who have never felt listened to or seen. It means so much more than economic assistance alone or opportunities for social advancement and privilege. Once again the Word truly becomes flesh/human/one of us.

Tabasco does bring spice to the food; but it becomes a rich banquet in which we find we are all one family. Come and discover the face of your brothers and sisters, and risk finding your own heart! ☒

(See the details for the Guadalupe Faith & Hospitality Experience in Mexico on the following page.)

