



Benedictine Monks
Weston Priory
58 Priory Hill Rd.
Weston, VT 05161-6400

December 2009

Dear friends:

Together with our Mexican Benedictine Sisters, we send you greetings in this Advent and coming Christmas season; and we thank you for your continued interest in the work of the Sisters and their mission at the Guadalupe Center in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

As the Sisters reflected in their letter, this has been a difficult year at the Center because very few groups from the United States came to the Center. Certainly we understood the insecurity generated in fear that the swine flu epidemic was originating in Mexico and the almost daily reports in the news media of drug-related violence, especially in the Border States. This fear caused anxiety and apprehension on the part of some persons considering the Experience in Mexico in the past year and resulted in a number of cancellations.

In the meantime, the Sisters have been working tirelessly to continue the mission of the Guadalupe Center and have continued to welcome many groups from Mexico. However, a large part of this mission is the outreach to persons and groups from the United States and Canada in order to forge the bonds of friendship and understanding among our peoples.

The Sisters have reflected from their experience, and from talking with persons in Mexico who are astutely aware of the social and health situation of the country, that news media has exaggerated the situation in Mexico during this past year. The Sisters themselves have not observed or known any of the widespread illness or the degree of violence in Mexico City or Cuernavaca that appeared so generalized in the news. Even recent reports about Mexico from people working in the travel industry say that they are informing travelers that there is no more danger in Mexico than anywhere else in the world.

The Sisters know their country and are confident that they can provide safe and healthy surroundings and experiences for their guests. And, despite the rising costs of even basic goods in Mexico, they are maintaining the fee for the Experience at the 2007 level.

For this reason, we invite you to organize a new group or to come again for a new experience at the Center in 2010. Mindful of the economic restraints of this time, in addition to the 10-day Experience the Sisters have been leading over the last 25 years, they are offering the possibility for smaller groups and shorter stays at the Center. Groups of six to eight persons for five to seven days can be accommodated. Programs at the Center are flexible and can be adapted to the interests and time constraints of the group.

Groups could simply come just to enjoy the hospitality of the Sisters and structure their time in creative ways among themselves. Or, they can focus the experience on the cultural, archeological and/or the ecological heritage of Mexico; the life of the indigenous people, their youth, crafts and cooperatives; alternative forms of health care; developments in human rights; Base Christian

Communities; the experience of women in the emerging world; or any other area of interest or combination of interests that a group may have.

The hospitality of the Sisters is extraordinary as many of you well know. You are able to help the Sisters to continue their work and mission at the Guadalupe Center by organizing groups. This is a challenging mission to build the bridges that link peoples with one another and to open hearts to a new vision of God's Reign inspired by Gospel and deeply human values. Your efforts will be much appreciated.

You can contact us at Weston Priory by telephone (802-824-5409) and speak with Anne Johnston, the office assistant for the Guadalupe Experience (she is in the office on Monday and Wednesday mornings) or contact us at any time through e-mail mexico@westonpriory.org

Thank you sincerely for your enthusiasm and interest to promote this program over the last 25 years. You continue to bless us, the Sisters in Mexico, and the people of Latin America.

**With sincere gratitude,
your brothers of Weston Priory**