

The Little Brothers of the Gospel: A visit to La Garnacha

Before we depart from the area of San Nicolas, we are invited to spend a few days of quiet reflection with the Little Brothers of the Gospel who share pastoral responsibility in the parish with the sisters. The brothers live in a small settlement a 45-minute drive by truck from San Nicolas.

La Garnacha is higher in the mountains than San Nicolas and has just one street, with a simple modern church and an adjoining retreat center.



The church at La Garnacha

Farther down the street are a cheese factory, the brothers' house and farm, and four or five family homes. At the end of the street is a grove of evergreen trees that overlooks a picturesque valley far below.

Brother Patricio, whom we had already met in San Nicolas, is the pastor of the parish. He shows us to the little retreat center adjacent to the circular church. We hasten to settle into the three small simple rooms with wall-to-wall cots.



Brothers Philip and Augustine



Brothers Timothy, Michael and John

It is already dark inside the building. There are bare light bulbs in two of the rooms. They will function later for a few hours when the outside generator is turned on. Flashlights come in handy.

There is a simple shower and concrete sink with running water. The outdoor restrooms are rustic and appear primitive in spite of their advanced ecological technology.

Once we get a little accustomed to our surroundings, we see that the brothers have utilized environmentally sound technology to live simply and resourcefully on this rugged mountain.

It is somewhat windy when we arrive. Throughout the night, the winds rattle the roof and roar around the edges of the building. There is light rain toward morning, and when 14 brothers line up at the single faucet for morning cleanup, not everyone has slept through the tempest. We are told it was simply a normal night in La Garnacha.



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