



Monastery of Trinitarian Nuns in Suesa.

# Signs of Hope: the Nuns of Suesa

- *brother Elias*

**T**HE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER FOUND US TRAVELING by air from Boston, to Paris, to Bilbao, and then on to Suesa, Cantabria, Spain, to a monastery of Trinitarian Nuns. The nuns of Suesa are part of a religious movement founded in 1198 by Saint John of Mata. The mission of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity is for the liberation and redemption of captives in occupied lands and in praise of the Trinity. In their origins the monasteries were also places of healing and hospitality for the poor, the sick, and pilgrims. Still today the sisters open their monasteries as places where people from far and near can continue or even begin their “camino”, their inner life journey of liberation in an atmosphere of “being at home” and “feeling safe” within the context of prayer, silence, and hospitality offered by the nine sisters in the monastic community.

A week after returning home and reflecting on our unique encounter with the sisters, we tried to summarize it in one sentence: “In their Gospel inspired life, the sisters inspire HOPE . . . pure and simple.”

We observed and we felt the joy of their greeting; in their strong embraces; in their questioning, searching, and vulnerability during our daily discussions; in the movement/dance that graces their common prayer; in the feminine face of God that they radiate in their reflections,



Trinitarian Cross, gift of Suesa nuns.

songs, and chants; in the spontaneity and warmth of their hospitality; in their outreach to women, youth, young couples, and people held in modern day forms of slavery; and in the very joy and enthusiasm of their being. All of this is sourced in their creative prayer, gentleness, authenticity, nurturing wisdom, playfulness and harmonious way of life.

The sisters gave us several gifts to take home and to share with several brothers who were not able to be with us in Suesa. There was one particular gift that brought joy and gratitude to our hearts. It stands as a symbol of what we had been about in the previous fourteen days. It is a handmade cross, about the size of an open hand, with segments of thick, red and blue, stained glass inserted into the two horizontal and vertical pieces of wood. Crafted by the sisters, this beautiful cross now has a special place in our monastery where it calls us to remember the love and friendship that has grown among us. We delight in the way the light filters through the various thicknesses of the glass, refracting in subtle and surprising ways. The cross captures, like an icon, the deeper dimensions of our shared two weeks of intercommunity experiences and dialog that have continued to bless and inspire us to this day. We are grateful! ■

Suesa sisters' website: [www.montrinisuesa.com](http://www.montrinisuesa.com)