



The hosts at the lunch at the Huazulco Amaranth Coop

Treasured New Beginnings

Anne Johnston

IN THE SIMPLE CHAPEL WITH ONE GLASS WALL LOOKING out over the diverse world of urban Cuernavaca, a woman comes from within the small circle and kneels before a low table filled with colorful items – symbols offered by each of the participants in the Guadalupe Experience to represent what this program has meant to them over the past several days. “I thought I knew what suffering was,” she says softly, “but here in Mexico my eyes have been opened. I have learned from the Sisters and the people we have met that their inner sense of peace is so much more powerful and empowering than despair.”

Every year thousands of North Americans fly to sunny Mexico to vacation at the famous beaches, but only a fortunate few take this “road-less-traveled” journey to the Guadalupe Center in Cuernavaca. There, people of various faith backgrounds are warmly welcomed by the Benedictine Sisters and accepted with love and respect as members of one big family.

Here at Weston, we receive many moving reactions to both the Guadalupe Experience and the generous hospitality of the Sisters. From college students to senior citizens, the respondents speak of how deeply they were affected by both the spirituality of the Sisters and the smiles of the beautiful children of Mexico. They praise the well-structured days,



Children at Coatetelco during Aztec dance

beautiful grounds, and the blending of historical and cultural insights with moments of prayer and reflection.

My husband Bob and I have touched this tapestry of experiences several times, not only at the Guadalupe Center and the Sisters’ Motherhouse in Mexico City, but also in small towns in Guerrero and Oaxaca. Each journey has opened another door with new treasures of understanding and friendship. As the *realidad* becomes part of us, we hope the companionship and solidarity we offer helps to build a strong bridge between our Mexican and Latin American brothers and sisters. For us, it means that the signs and issues of our times in the U.S. call us to respond by working for justice and peace. We are all one people – north and south of the border.

In words poetically expressing the richness of the experience, one participant reflected, “I see that Jesus has given my heart the spirit of the poor.” Indeed many persons have told me the Guadalupe Experience is life-altering, and that it is a pilgrimage worth taking.

We invite each of you to enter into this journey by participating in the Guadalupe Experience. Come and share in the gifts of an inspiring spirituality and vibrant culture that await you in Mexico. ■



Ceramic bas-relief plaque at the Guadalupe Center, Cuernavaca

The Guadalupe Faith/Hospitality Experience in Mexico

You are welcome to further explore this Experience
with our Benedictine Sisters in Mexico.
Updated information is available
on our website:

www.westonpriory.org/mexico/index.html

or by mail: Weston Priory
Attn: Guadalupe Retreat
58 Priory Hill Road
Weston, VT 05161-6400

e-mail: mexico@westonpriory.org

phone: (802) 824-5409

Life Together in One Heart



SAINT BENEDICT CONCLUDES THE PROLOGUE OF HIS RULE for Monks with this exhortation: “As we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God’s instructions, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love.” Our path through life, towards God, is marked by encounters with many persons and occasions, some of which can be foreseen and others unexpected. Our faith and our monastic practice are enriched by them all. The following chronicles some of these community encounters over the past several months.

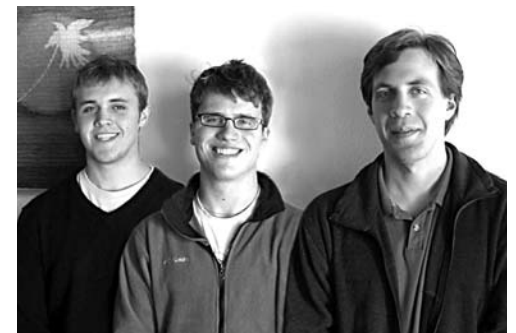
November 2009

The coming of winter brings more opportunities to focus on the work we do in our craft shops. A good friend, John Gorman, has been helping brother Michael in our woodshop by demonstrating and sharing his expertise in wood working and woodshop safety. We have purchased a lathe and are delighting in the simple yet beautiful bowls and candle holders that are the fruit of our own labor. Even more, as part of this creative endeavor, we are now milling various kinds of wood – ash, cherry, maple, and apple – all harvested from our own forest land.

December 2009

An Exploration of Monastic Values:

From December 28th to January 3rd we welcomed a group of three men to share in “An Experience of Monastic Living” for seven days: Jim Tomlinson of Hartford, Connecticut; Joseph Carlsmith of Madison, Wisconsin; and Jacob Paysour who hails from southwest Virginia. This privileged time was filled with rich exchange and profound



l to r: Jacob Paysour, Joseph Carlsmith, and Jim Tomlinson