

## Managua 2001: A very different journey

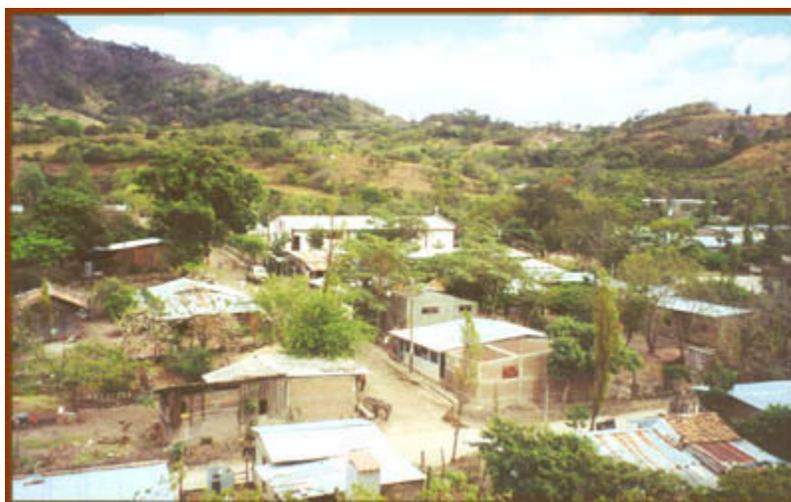
JANUARY 2001: The plane from Boston via Miami to Managua lands promptly at noon on the lone airport runway. It has been 13 years, but now the Benedictine community of Weston has returned to Nicaragua—this time to a very different situation, to a very different country.

After a warm greeting by the Mexican Benedictine sisters, the brothers are escorted to the barrio where the sisters have a small house that serves as a novitiate.



Walking through the barrio

Our Mexican Benedictine sisters have established two small communities among the poor in Nicaragua. One is located in an impoverished barrio in the capital city, Managua. The other is in the rural mountain municipality of San Nicolas de Oriente, between Leon and Esteli.



The community at San Nicolas de Oriente

The Sandinistas are no longer in power, however, and the corruption of the present government is comparable to that of the Somoza regime. As in all of Latin America, the politics are not simple and are usually harsh!

And like the politics, the climate of Nicaragua also can be harsh. In 1998 the ravages of Hurricane Mitch devastated much of the country. Homes were washed away with the floods, crops destroyed, illness and poverty rampant. Families already extremely poor were left with absolutely nothing. With few if any resources, they were left to begin rebuilding their lives. There was little hope that aid would be coming from the government.

In response to this disaster, many generous friends of Weston Priory joined with us in sending aid to help in the rebuilding of homes and lives in San Nicolas and the surrounding villages. Now we would have a chance to see first-hand what the people of this area had been able to accomplish with such small resources in the face of such great need.

Indeed, they were both grateful for the assistance that was offered to them and proud of their accomplishments in using that aid. Our visit to Nicaragua in 2001 became an occasion for the expression of solidarity, gratitude, and mutual gifting.



**The Monks of Weston Priory**

**58 Priory Hill Road, Weston, VT 05161-6400**

**Tel: 802-824-5409; Fax: 802-824-3573**