



Pastoral Letter of Gratitude

To the Pastoral Team of *La Obra de San Martin*

Giving birth to the Savior of the world was not easy! Mary and Joseph were denied posada many times and many places before they found the perfect throne for the baby who was to be the power of the poor at work in the world to feed the hungry and cast down the mighty from their thrones.

We know the story. We know of Mary, her Song. We know of Joseph and his doubts. We know the simple shepherds who responded in faith with acts of love and mercy. We know the wise men who followed the unknown in faith. We know the powers that got in the way. The Feast of Innocents is not far behind as power, vanity and egotism continue in our world even though Jesus has been born.

You are an amazing team of people! You accepted an ambiguous challenge almost one year ago. Like the shepherds and wise men, you have followed and lead, with only your trust in the light of God as your guide. Acts of love and mercy have been your fruits. Truth and transparency have been your shield and armor.

Like so many times in history – and the cradle of joy and innocence is made from the same wood that became the cross of suffering – truth is on the scaffold. As the shepherds celebrate and gather the simple and lowly singing with the angels, Herod plots in his palace in safer ground. As Mary and Joseph nurture their child of God, the traitors of the people – like Judas himself – begin to sell a project for a simple bag of groceries.

You, as leaders, have paid a price. I am sorry that the Way of the Cross has been such a painful one this year. You have seen the forces of evil alive in those who rule and govern and in those whose souls have been bought. The faces of violence and envy and selfishness and greed are not pretty faces. They come in all sizes, ages and colors.



As we move on to create something new and more reflective of the light of Bethlehem and the love of God for the poor, we do not move on alone. The God of the Poor continues to be with us. This God continues to illumine our way. This God will take us into Egypt for awhile as we regroup, as we lick our wounds, as we work on our own survival and health. We will not be consumed by the slaughter of the Innocents. God did not bring us this far to abandon us now.

No, we will not go back to Sacred Ground that has become salty. As we leave Sodom and Gomorrah, we will not look back at the pillars of salt – those who were with us who chose to go back because the food bag looked more promising than manna in the desert.

We will look for new Sacred Ground, and new Sacred Ground we will find. Your work has not been in vain. Take the time you need to heal, to refocus, to look into the manger of the Christ child and offer a word of thanks. You have walked through the desert and come out alive. You did not remain as a pillar of salt. But you continue to be called forward.

The victory is not easy. We do not know what the victory will be like. We do not know what victory is. All we know is that we have been called to serve a God who would lift up the poor. Thank you for your faithfulness in this journey. Thank you for your witness. The pain you have experienced will pass and faith will become stronger. You are wiser now, because you have seen and you continue to walk in the Light.

Glory be to God in the Highest, and on earth Peace for you for the living and celebrating of these days.

En mucha solidaridad. H.L.V.S. Thank you for your continued love for the Church of the Poor and for continuing to sing Mary's Song!

25 de diciembre, 2010

The Rev. David J. Kalke