

## The Community of St. Martin La Comunidad de San Martín

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### Holy Thursday

### Guadalajara, 2010

Spiderman was on the outside of the Cathedral wall facing the clock in the Plaza de Armas where years before Pancho Villa almost shot out the “V” of the clock. On the inside of the Cathedral was the venerated Body of Christ over the tombs of the first bishops of the Roman Catholic Church who presided over the founding of the city and the church more than 475 years ago.

The plazas were filled. The Plaza de Guadalajara, directly in front of the Cathedral had no usual buses and taxis rustling their way down the main avenue of Guadalajara. The only vehicles were the vendors – and there were vendors knowing that pilgrims and tourists and the curious would be buying everything from chips with chili to corn, broccoli and cauliflower plates with mayonnaise and cheese. The vendors of rosaries. Pascal candles for 2010 of every size and shape for your home worship and reflection spots. People in wheelchairs and on crutches. Mothers clutching deformed babies. The elderly. Children. Youth. All with their “7 prayers” booklets waiting to get inside the Cathedral, if but just for a moment to read one of the 7 prayers designed for 7 churches on Holy Thursday. Each pilgrim will go to 7 churches and read the 7 prayers in hopes of...the miracle. If the Cathedral could just be one of those 7, maybe my child will be healed. Maybe I can get close enough to the healing garment of the Body of Christ and touch it. That’s all, just touch it and be healed. Good energy for the living of these days: the mystical power of the Body of Christ. Tonight it is more real than ever.

The Cathedral was as packed as the four plazas around it. The conservative homophobic Cardinal was leading the Mass, concelebrated with a host of clergy surrounded by choirs of nuns and seminarians. People. Sitting and participating. People wandering in front of the

relics. People reading one of their seven prayers. The smell of the incense. The daunting sound of the never ending church bells ringing with the 7 plus other churches in the area. With Spiderman venerated outside by the masses who gathered and Jesus venerated on the inside of the Cathedral walls by the masses who gathered and wandered in search of, in search of the Body of Christ.

And the lights were not on in the Plaza de Armas. Perhaps so the children's toys that glow in the dark could be better seen and sold. Perhaps so the iridescent costume of Spiderman could be better seen. Who knows. But it was a safe space for couples to sit and talk and caress. Even for gay couples just a stone wall away from the homophobic Cardenal living the illusion that he had been entrusted with the power to incarnate Jesus on this Holy Day. Ah, he would wish, if only he had the power to make the love of Jesus defined according to his conservative political values. But "stonewall" has happened and stone walls are broken. The love of Jesus knows no human-made walls. Good luck with that one, Cardenal, and your conservative Roman counterparts. Old Nazis never die. They become popes.

Behind the Cathedral the new scaffolding going up to renew the old walls seemed to block the usual perfect sunset over the spires and stained glass windows. Not to be missed because the Plaza de Liberacion was filled with its own version of Holy Thursday. More than one hundred fifty booths of vendors selling artesanias from villages in Jalisco. Locally grown coffees to leather goods to ceramic pots to woven wonders to carefully sculptured wood and stone to hats to jewelry to candies to silver crucifixes to honey and more were there. Sixteen days of Holy Week and Easter Week the artisans came from afar hoping to sell, hoping the Body of Christ would make a real difference in their economic life so that maybe they could buy the medicines needed for their child, just in case the miracle doesn't happen, to pay the rent, to buy the clothes needed for school. Aghast, we might think, that the venerated Body of Christ would have economic value. But the words "ecumenical" and "economic" and "community" aren't they somehow related? Don't they all come from the same root: OIKONOMIA? Maybe the Body of Christ does have something to do with the everyday living of human beings trying to survive, to manage, to become a unit. Maybe the poor and the working class in search of comm-untiy where needs are managed and met is basic to the Body of Christ. Maybe being lifted up economically is a modern day version of ecumenism where people gather to support one another in their quest for healing and wholeness – not unlike the original Body of Christ who was involved in healing and reminding people of poor's economic needs.

But the Plaza de Liberacion didn't stop with vendors. For 16 nights of Holy Week and the Easter Octave musicians and dancers grace the full-moon lit sky in front of the tremendous fountain that is in front of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Teatro Degollado which stands on the edge of the Plaza of the Founders (going back to 1542). Dancers and mariachi musicians from Chiapas,

Oaxaca, Jalisco. Native Huicholes. Youth. The dance of the old men from Michoacan. The colorful dresses. The love songs. The songs of sadness. The dances of the courting rooster and hen. The lizard looking under women's dresses. The horse. The cow. Where the natural images leave the earth to enter humanity creating a oneness in an urban center that has come to mean national identity and roots. A night at peace. No military. No police. No guns. The Body of Christ was the glue that created the space. Narcos to be seen only on CNN and in the speeches of conservative (including Hilary and Obama) US politicians.

Potato chips and "rusas" (sodas with lemons) and candies of various sorts. Children with balloons. Adults at peace in a safe spot. The music is loud. Spiderman continues to climb the wall of the Cathedral. Artisans and vendors continue to sell. The gay couples continue to embrace. The homophobic Cardinal reaches the point in the Mass where the words of Institution are spoken. The bells ring. The strings of the mariachi instruments are stretched to their fullest imagination. Change is made. A child smiles. A beggar gets a coin. The Word of God has become visible. The Body of Christ once again mystically appears. The feet are washed. The Mass has ended. Go in Peace.

The Body of Christ. The Church. Christ and Culture. Economy and ecumenism embrace each other as do righteousness and peace to create comm-unity. Christ is venerated. The Body of Christ is revealed anew in all of its brokenness and wholeness. This is the Body of Christ.

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The Community of St. Martin  
Guadalajara, 2010