

MISSION STATEMENT

The Christ the King Social Justice Committee exists to promote, nourish, and sustain the ministry of Social Justice through the parish community by serving as a catalyst for and being an active participant in addressing social injustices within and outside the parish community

Just Us Parishioners

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Social Justice Committee

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Since Today is the Feast of Christ the King, We Want to Draw Your Attention to Our Sister Community of Asuchillo in La Libertad, El Salvador

By Bill and Bunny Griffitts



Christ the King Delegation and Members of Asuchillo Community

In 1992, the SHARE Foundation, a non-profit organization formed to help rebuild El Salvador, asked our parish to help other Faith Communities fill a truck going to El Salvador with school and sewing supplies.

We were then asked by the SHARE Foundation if we would like a more permanent relationship with the community of Asuchillo, which was the recipient of these supplies. We then joined St. Philip Neri of Alameda, St. Isidore School of Danville, and Resurrection Lutheran of Dublin to form a sister relationship with Asuchillo. In these thirteen years we have helped this community of 400 families with many of their needs. Christ the King has donated approximately \$14,000 through the annual Social Justice collections and individuals from the parish have also reached into their pockets at different times to help with special emergencies.

Christ the King has been instrumental in these endeavors:

- Purchase of acreage with a fruit orchard and space for vegetable gardening
- Building a fence to protect this orchard
- Building a chicken coop that has served many purposes through the years: chickens, a classroom for women to learn to read and write, and a home for a family displaced after the earthquake

- Digging a small water well near the preschool
- Construction of a library
- Construction of a Pre/K School and game room with help from Spain
- Construction of a pavilion by a private donor
- Rebuilding homes after the earthquake
- Financed a regional project spanning two years to teach women about human rights, leadership formation, methods for soliciting funds, and making proposals for local projects
- Construction of a new water system which is bringing water into all the homes, funded and built by Engineers Beyond Borders.

On our visit in 2003, our interpreter told us, "The municipality of Asuchillo is now one of the strongest and most organized communities and is, therefore, recognized by outside organizations and they are receiving much assistance." We feel that Christ the King can take some credit for the leadership skills and growth in this small community.

On our last visit to El Salvador in April of this year, the seven delegates from Christ the King visited Asuchillo and celebrated with them their achievements and let them know it was now time for us as a community to move on to a more impoverished region and hopefully help them to become self sustaining.

Impressions of El Salvador

By Jodi Henrekin.

The trip to El Salvador with the Christ the King delegation was an opportunity to experience first hand a third world country and its people—to hear their stories. There were many meaningful connections during my week. Some of the highlights of this time for me were:

Memorial Wall of Remembrance in San Salvador. The wall contains names of 75,000 civilian children, women, and men killed or who disappeared during the civil war of the 1980's and 1990's. We heard some of their stories and offered prayers for the victims. At the closing we were given roses as a sign of solidarity with the people. In turn we gave our roses to the Salvadorian women of Asuchillo.

Jesuit University of Central America. We had the privilege to listen to presentations by Liberation Theologians, Father Gustavo Gutierrez and Father Jon Sabrina. These were translated for us as we sat outside with earphones as there was no room in the auditorium. It was quite a moving experience. On the campus we visited a chapel dedicated to Oscar Romero. We also visited the site of the killings of six Jesuits and two women. A museum, near the Rose Garden burial place, was created in their memory—a very sacred site. We also had the opportunity to hear a woman theologian speak on martyrdom throughout the ages.

Youth Experience. On a trip to the countryside, I enjoyed seeing and hearing from the youth (12-26 years old) about their life accomplishments and projects. Their projects include a very modern restaurant, bakery, and cheese factory which were financed by Basque businesses. The youth have been trained by Spanish and German tradesmen. They also have been educated in organic farming and have learned about the advantages of co-operatives.

It was quite impressive to observe and converse with the people of the various communities, hearing their stories, and seeing their determination to improve the living conditions of their people.

San Vicente Visit

By Mary Silva

During our week visit to El Salvador to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Oscar Romero's death, we visited the CRIPDES community, a grassroots and sistering program of the SHARE Foundation, in San Vicente. We stayed for two days and met with the CRIPDES leaders, Director Francisco Lopes and a team of women leaders.

CRIPDES accompanies communities in

Community Organization, Women's Development, Sistering Relationships, Youth Development and Leadership, and Advocacy.

Through the support of CRIPDES, the women have organized themselves and have tackled many problems in the community such as alcoholism. The women are participating in community decisions and are developing youth programs. They recognize that the youth are their future. They also are pursuing youth education and fostering gender equality.

Through the Social Justice Committee, Christ the King has signed a five-year agreement establishing our relationship with the CRIPDES community in San Vicente. Our commitment is to support the community's women's program.



CRIPDES Community Leaders

Immersion Experience

By Pat Krammer

When asked why I went to El Salvador this past spring, my primary reason was that I wanted to “experience” the country—its people, its history—whatever I could observe through seeing, hearing, walking, and talking. Very honestly, I did experience the country in a small but profound way in just a week's time. Our group found the people very warm, friendly, and hospitable. We listened to the tragic stories of those who lived through the civil war. We walked along their memorial wall in San Salvador, so similar to our Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. We spent two days in the countryside, meeting those involved with various community-organized groups. However, I was particularly struck by the poverty in some areas—families living in shacks along the hillside and women with baskets on their heads going down to the river to wash their clothes. But, my lasting impression was the determination of the people to move forward with their lives, to want a “hand-up,” not a “hand-out.” I am very happy that our parish can help them in a small way, especially through our partnership with the SHARE Foundation.