

## **Missionary Cooperation Plan** **Sandra McCabe**

Thank you Fr. Marty. I also thank the Archdiocesan Mission office that assigned the SHARE Foundation as part of the Missionary Cooperative Plan to make the mission appeal here at St. Sebastian and I thank you who have been most generous to mission appeals in the past.

The SHARE Foundation is the organization that fosters our sister relationship with Teosinte. SHARE empowers people in communities like Teosinte throughout El Salvador through the model of *accompaniment*.

The purpose of the mission appeal is to send funds to SHARE that in turn supports women's empowerment like micro loans, the sewing co-op or youth development and youth leadership.

SHARE also looks at regional projects like mining which causes harm to the environment. Another project would be the water situation. Unlike here, water in Teosinte is rationed from Jan –May. The community is looking to purchase some land with a water source.

As part of the delegation to El Salvador this past August, I was able to hear the stories of the people in Teosinte. Let me say though my Spanish language skills are limited, I understood the universal language of love and hospitality demonstrated throughout the delegation's visit.

As I listened to the stories I met God in a new way. Allow me to share a few:

I met God in the stories from young people who struggle with making good decisions and not succumbing to the pressures of gang activities.

I met God in the recipients of high school and university scholarship funds from St. Sebs who struggle with whether to stay in their El Salvador or come the US (most often illegally) They want to use the skills and knowledge they've acquired but there are not jobs for them in Teosinte or even the country of El Salvador. They also realize that a job in the USA would be a way of sending money to their families.

I met God in the pain and the heartache of the stories of survivors of the massacres of 1980 but whose family members did not. These were Salvadorans fleeing the Salvadoran army trying to cross the Sumpul River to seek safety in Honduras; in Arnulfo who carried his daughter on his back across the blood drenched Sumpul River

I met God in listening to the new mayor of Chalatenango, the Department which encompasses Teosinte, who will look at issues that have been ignored by the previous government.

I met God in the gratitude expressed as Heime accepted the prayer shawl, knit and blessed here at St. Sebastian, as he and his siblings were mourning for their father who died 7 days prior to our arrival in Teosinte

I met God in the *Directiva*, the elected officials (including youth) that lift and support the spirit and work of the community.

I met God in the repatriation celebration of Teosinte, in the joy and hope of the people.

I met God in the extended family with which I lived while in Teosinte, in Wilma and her husband who gave us their home, sharing anything, and everything they had.

I met God in the *Directiva* and Pastoral Committee who gave us this cross as a symbol of shared faith; our sistering relationship and in gratitude of St. Sebastian Parish support for Teosinte.

We will continue to pray through the prayers of the faithful for the community of Teosinte. I invite you to prayer for those who work through SHARE for economic sustainability, justice, and human and civil rights.

I ask and encourage you if you can to support monetarily the work of the SHARE Foundation. This is one way you can be in mission which is the call for *all of us* by virtue of our Baptism. This is another way you can *accompany* the people of Teosinte.