

SALVANET

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2004

Focus on
20 Years of
Solidarity

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Leaven in the Loaf: Reflections from one of CRISPAZ's founders

by Rev. Dan Long

The accompaniment provided by Christians for Peace in El Salvador is like a little bit of leaven in a batch of bread dough. I see that now as I return after a 10-year absence from the board of directors. This accompaniment is not the biggest of programs, not the most visible in the eyes of the world, not glamorous, not catching many headlines, not taking up much space and certainly not wanting to gather in the limelight; but, to the degree that actual accompaniment has taken place, the work of CRISPAZ has had a real effect much greater than its modest size.

And, in some ways, being leaven is what makes accompaniment in El Salvador today about the same thing as it was 20 years ago when CRISPAZ began. At first blush it would seem that much has changed in the last two decades. Moving from war to peace would qualify in this category. But, all things considered, it would probably be more accurate to say that the fundamental conflicts of Salvadoran society continue, the playing field for seeking resolution

having moved from the battlefield to less overtly violent venues. The most serious human problems remain unchanged – the grinding poverty, the lack of alternatives for the younger generations, the tendency for the authorities to use violence to solve social and economic problems; and, the never ending intervention by our country in the central affairs of another. Also unchanging is the irrepressible spirit of the

ordinary Salvadoran who lives, believes with all his or her heart, and acts with full confidence that sometime soon things will turn around for the better and the full blessings of life will be present, if not for them, then certainly for their children.

Accompaniment was the central idea that gave birth to CRISPAZ almost twenty years ago and it remains the central idea today. Has there been any change in this idea over time? Mostly it is the circumstances that have changed. Then, we accompanied a people at war, in the military sense. The danger was palpable, but we knew where the threat was coming from and almost all the options available to avoid it. Now we accompany in a situation of civil conflict that is characterized by a very high level of violence that takes a variety of forms. The danger is not always palpable, despite its omnipresence, and we do not have, always, a good idea of where the threat may come from and only a partial idea of how to avoid it. But accompaniment still acts like leaven, raising questions that beg to be answered.



Stations of the cross during Holy Week in Bethania refugee camp.

If accompaniment then was the Bethania Refugee camp, raising the question of why Salvadorans in their own country need the protection of North Americans; now it is our accompaniment of the gangs in prison and our work with youth groups in the barrios that raises the question of why so many youth join gangs to find meaning in life. In fact, the answer to both questions is the same: The principalities and powers of the country and the hemisphere conspire to prevent the young, the poor, the uneducated, the indigenous from realizing their full potential for fear that such a realization would reduce the power and wealth of their established ruling class.

The circumstances and the on-the-ground reality, beginning with the way one feels, have changed. I have to admit that, despite being concerned about the rats that were crossing the beams of the roof in the room between the storeroom and the kitchen where I slept in the volunteer quarters the night I visited the Bethania Refugee Camp, I felt at home there. It was very clear to me and to the organization how our presence was helping to protect a vulnerable population. This year, as I returned to El Salvador and to the CRISPAZ board, we visited members of a gang in one of the national prisons. We sat in a circle with members of an organization of prisoners, primarily gang members, dedicated to providing better alternatives to violence. We were surrounded by a hundred other gang members, all of them tattooed up to the necks and more. I have to admit that I never

felt more ill at ease or anxious about my safety or the safety of our volunteers even when I worked as a missionary during the war in El Salvador. Nevertheless, our accompaniment of the young and poor, our work with gangs in the city and in the prisons, our accompaniment of youth searching for alternatives in life, of their reality and their struggle provides us and those who listen to them through us with just as profound an insight into the heart of social conflict and violence in El Salvador as did our presence in Bethania Refugee camp twenty years ago.

Accompaniment is still a two way street; still a significant contribution to the process of searching for peace in El Salvador, in our continent and in our world; still a statement of the possibilities for a more just and peaceable way of forming human community and still a tremendous challenge and learning experience for all who participate.

To be absolutely honest, my impression is that it was easier then than it is now. And, still, Christians for Peace in El Salvador believes that someday it will be the case that accompaniment is not a program, not a strategy, not a way to make a statement, not the exception, but rather, the preferred, natural and shared way of being neighbors.✝

Dan Long is a Lutheran pastor in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Along with Father Peter Hinde and Patty Lane, Long helped found Christians for Peace in El Salvador in 1984. He rejoined the CRISPAZ Board of Directors in 2003 and currently serves as the board's vice-chairperson.

From the Editor

In 1984, El Salvador was immersed in a civil war that pitted the church of the poor amongst the enemies of a repressive and militarized state. In a response to this situation, people of faith in the U.S. began to look for ways to stand beside this church of the poor and support her people in their struggle. One clear response came from Rev. Dan Long, a Lutheran pastor, Father Peter Hinde, a Carmelite priest, and Patty Lane, a Quaker, who formed Christians for Peace in El Salvador with the simple goal of offering accompaniment, of walking alongside a suffering people. 20 years later, the goal remains simple while the reality of offering true accompaniment, now in Quezaltepeque prison rather than Bethania refugee camp, remains a daily challenge. We are pleased in this issue to take a step back and present some reflections on CRISPAZ and its work over the years. We'd also like to take the opportunity to thank all of you that have been there walking with us through the years and helping us create these bridges of solidarity and transformative relationships that form the CRISPAZ community. Enjoy the issue!

CRISPAZ, Christians for Peace in El Salvador, was founded in 1984. We are a faith-based organization dedicated to mutual accompaniment with the church of the poor and marginalized communities in El Salvador. In building bridges of solidarity between communities in El Salvador and those in our home countries, we strive together for peace, justice and human liberation. As an organization, we are non-partisan and committed to nonviolence.



*Comments or questions regarding **Salvanet** can be sent to: salvanet@crispaz.org*

Decisive Right-win Victory in Presidential Elections

by Chris Ney and Kelly Creedon

“Fear won the election.” That was the assessment of many observers of El Salvador’s presidential elections held Sunday March 21. The ruling right-wing party, ARENA, represented by Tony Saca, faced off against the party of the ex-guerillas, the FMLN, headed by Shafik Handal. (Two other candidates, representing smaller parties or coalitions, also participated. But attention focused on the ARENA-FMLN contest.) After last March’s surprisingly strong showing by the left-wing FMLN in legislative elections, many saw this election—the third presidential contest since peace accords ended a civil war in 1992—as the opposition’s best chance to capture the presidency.

Pre-election opinion polls offered contradictory views of the Salvadoran public’s mood: many showed the rival candidates in a statistical tie until the final weeks of the campaign. As election day—and the prospect of an FMLN win—drew closer, the ARENA fear campaign grew more extreme. Campaign ads featured individuals who lost family members to FMLN violence during the war. An ARENA-related women’s organization published photos of burning U.S. flags; the ARENA campaign asserted that the FMLN would lead El Salvador toward totalitarianism, abolishing private property and future elections.

But the Salvadoran right was not the only peddler of scare tactics. Representatives of the US government added their voices to the fear campaign. In a widely reported interview conducted by telephone from ARENA campaign headquarters, President Bush’s Special Envoy for Western Hemisphere Initiatives, Otto Reich, said that the US and FMLN did “not share values and principles such as democracy....” He suggested “radical change” in US-Salvador relations if the FMLN won. In the US Congress, Tom Tancredo (R-CO) threatened to place limits on the remittances sent to El Salvador by family members living abroad.

These remittances—totalling more than \$2 billion in 2003—are El Salvador’s largest source of national income. Many economists predict economic collapse



Photo: Raúl Gutierrez

if their flow should be interrupted even briefly. Tancredo, who chairs the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus, also suggested that the immigration status of 300,000 Salvadorans living in the United States might be threatened by an FMLN victory. His opinions were echoed by Representatives Dan Burton (R-IN) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA). Last year, former US Ambassador Rose Likins made similar threats about a FMLN victory.

The fear tactics—domestic and international—worked. Salvadorans turned out in record numbers (some observers estimated 70% participation) and the ARENA candidate Tony Saca beat the FMLN’s Shafik Handel by a 3-2 margin. (The FMLN retains control of the largest municipal governments and has the most votes in congress.)

The United States has a long and tragic history of intervention in the Americas. Support for the Salvadoran military during the 1980’s is one of the bloodiest and most controversial chapters of that history as a civil war claimed more than 75,000 lives and Salvadoran soldiers trained in the United States committed grievous human rights violations.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the United States has pledged itself anew to promoting democracy and combating poverty and ignorance, yet the old patterns of domination remain unchanged. As Congressional committees investigate US actions during the recent overthrow of Haitian President Jean Bertrand Aristide and questions circulate about the US role in Venezuela’s unrest, Salvadoran voting results suggest a new intervention tactic. The Bush administration’s doctrine of preemptive intervention extends to the electoral field through the manipulation of fear and public insecurity to tip an election outcome.

The targeted use of fear is a powerful motivator, especially for a people who have been traumatized by war, state terrorism, or economic insecurity. The implications for democratic government—whether newly formed or well-established—are deeply disturbing. ✚

Coming to “a sacred place:” El Salvador Encounter participants reflect on their journey

Since March of 1985, CRISPAZ has hosted hundreds of El Salvador Encounter delegation trips, guiding thousands of individuals in their first encounter with the Salvadoran people. The El Salvador Encounter experience is an opportunity for many individuals to open their eyes to a different reality. Meetings with political, social, and community leaders in their workplaces, common spaces, and homes provide a variety of perspectives and allow participants to see the real people behind the social and political issues. The following are excerpts from reflections written by El Salvador Encounter participants about their delegation experience.

“The opportunity to have one’s eyes opened is nothing other than a gift of the highest magnitude, and our time with CRISPAZ has been such a gift. Whatever the discomfort or sadness I have felt at learning the truths and pain and anguish of the Salvadoran history and people, I truly believe that the burden of not knowing was a greater one to bear. Each harsh reality I saw made my heart a bit lighter, because I could begin to understand rather than ignore, love and respect rather than marginalize. Thank you for that.”

- Leslie Mackrell, Fordham University, January 2004

“This encounter experience broke my heart and lifted my spirits at the same time. I am so grateful to have been able to walk in the shoes of Salvadorans if only for a short time.

This journey of solidarity continues, though, it is only just beginning.

May I carry their struggles and their smiles in my heart forever.”

- Molly Robertshaw, Xavier University, May 2003



Photo courtesy of Lutheran World Relief Coffee Project

“For the first time, in my mind’s eye, the bean and cup are connected. Thanks to CRISPAZ and Equal Exchange, when I hold a cup of coffee during social time at church on Sunday mornings, I can think back to how that coffee came to be. I can see the steep hillsides on which feet must move with care while hands place bean after bean in baskets. I can see those baskets emptied into sacks, those sacks of 100 pounds or more hoisted over shoulders and carried to trucks. Still to come, there is sorting, depulping, drying, roasting. In time, the coffee is brewed.

My prayer is that more and more

North Americans and Salvadorans will have
an opportunity to drink from the same cup.”

*- Duane Stoltzfus, Equal Exchange Interfaith Delegation,
January 2004*



Photo: Mike Owsiany

“We were told at our commissioning mass that we really weren’t going to El Salvador to ‘give’ to others, but that there would be so much to receive. This was indeed the case. I know that the images of the people we met will remain a part of my consciousness. And maybe at my more stressful times in my life, I will be able to remember how many of the Salvadorans view life – with dignity, fortitude, and love. As I am about to return home, I am excited to explore the various ways that I may continue to work for social justice.”

- Elizabeth Ciaravino, University of Scranton, June 2003

“El Salvador has become a **very sacred place** to me.

Some of the moments in which I’ve felt most alive in my life have been here. The people of this country have inspired me and given me energy to pursue what is important to me. I can think of no greater gift to have gotten from this experience. I don’t think I can make this place simply a memory, I have a feeling I’ll be back.”

- Claire Aver, Clark Montessori High School, April 2003

“Coming to El Salvador, I didn’t know what to expect. I was honestly nervous – many friends and relatives thought I would spend a week in absolute misery and come back distressed and nihilistic, that such poverty would prove to me that I was powerless. I was afraid all I would do is cry. And I did cry. I heard the testimonies of people affected by rampant violence and poverty, heard how my government had done such things that made their situation worse, heard about and saw sites where people were martyred. But I also laughed and found so much joy, compassion, generosity, and hope in the hardworking people I met, the other members of my delegation and I am leaving refreshed and more dedicated to continue working in social justice issues.”

- Denise Whall, Search for Economic Justice Delegation, August 2003

“I feel very honored to have had this experience. In spite of all the hardships we heard about regarding politics, agriculture, the economy, violence against women, lack of resources, deforestation, gangs, maquiladoras, etc... I won’t be leaving here sad. I’m leaving up-lifted to have spent so much time with El Salvador’s most precious and valuable resource – its people. I feel empowered and privileged to take back the messages they have entrusted me to share with my family, coworkers, and peers –
a message of solidarity, faith, and hope.”

- Caroline Kondrat, John Carroll University, March 2004



Photo: Mike Owsiany

Remembering the People's Prophet

March 24 marked the anniversary of 24 years of Archbishop Oscar Romero's martyrdom. In honor of the anniversary, we would like to share with you the following excerpts from "Oscar Romero: Reflections on His Life and Writings" by Marie Dennis, Renny Golden, and Scott Wright. In the book's introduction, the author states:

"Oscar Romero believed in the ability of subjugated people to know the truth about social reality, and he trusted their imaginative capacity to create an alternative path. Never just a theorist, he took part in the people's journey. Romero's importance comes from the fact that his prophetic voice addressed the effects of policies that leave the poor behind. Confronted with death on the streets each morning, the Salvadorans spoke not of darkness, but of slivers of light that illuminated small "openings." Romero's life is an opening that allows us to question power and to find hope rather than despair among the poor of our world who struggle for dignity in spite of structures and policies that continue to oppress them."

From Romero's writings and homilies:

"The poor have shown the church the true way to go. A church that does not join the poor, in order to speak out from the side of the poor against the injustices committed against them, is not the true church of Jesus Christ."

.....

"The poor person is the one who has been converted to God and puts all his faith in him, and the rich person is one who has not been converted to God and puts his confidence in idols: money, power, material things... Our work should be directed toward converting ourselves and all people to this authentic meaning of poverty."

.....

"It is something new among our people that today the poor see in the church a source of hope and a support for their noble struggle for liberation. The hope that our church encourages is neither naïve nor passive. It is rather a summons from the word of God for the great majority of the people, the poor, that they assume their proper responsibility, that they understand their own conscientization, that in a country where it is legally or practically prohibited... they set about organizing themselves. And it is support, sometimes critical support, for their just causes and demands. The hope that we preach to the poor is intended to give them back their dignity, to encourage them to take charge of their own future."



"Each time we look upon the poor, on the farmworkers who harvest the coffee, the sugarcane, or the cotton, or the farmer who joins the caravan of workers looking to earn their savings for the year... remember, there is the face of Christ..."

The face of Christ is among the sacks and baskets of the farmworker; the face of Christ is among those who are tortured and mistreated in the prisons; the face of Christ is dying of hunger in the children who have nothing to eat; the face of Christ is in the poor who ask the church for their voice to be heard. How can the church deny this request when it is Christ who is telling us to speak for him?"

.....

"Let us not measure the church by the number of its members or by its material buildings... Many buildings have been stolen from her and turned into libraries and barracks and markets. It doesn't matter. The material walls here will be left behind in history. What matters is you, the people, your hearts."

.....

"Those who... would save their lives (that is, those who want to get along, who don't want commitments, who don't want problems, who want to stay outside of a situation that demands the involvement of all of us) they will lose their lives. What a terrible thing to have lived quite comfortably, with no suffering... quite tranquil, quite settled, with good connections... To what good?"

Letter to Ellacuría: Saintliness and Fineness

The following is an edited translation of a letter written by Jesuit Jon Sobrino to his Jesuit brother Ignacio Ellacuría, former rector of the Central American University who was assassinated by the Salvadoran military in November of 1989. The letter was initially published in the UCA publication Proceso. Sobrino invited Salvanes to publish the letter, adding that "This is what I wish for CRISPAZ on their 20th anniversary: saintliness and fineness."

By Jon Sobrino

Translated by Irene Hodgson

Dear Ellacu:

In 1980, you gave a course on ecclesiology. With your characteristic rigor, you talked about the Church of the poor, about its identity and mission, and also emphasized how persecuted this Church was, both internally and externally. Actually, a few months later, we had to cancel the course after one of the students, a priest, was murdered, and others were threatened. You yourself had to leave the country, for you headed up the list of those to be killed. So, speaking of the Church of the poor and its problems, you said one of your telling phrases: "the ultimate weapon of the Church of the poor is saintliness."

I don't know if the benevolent reader of this letter will be surprised by these words, but, that is how it happened, and you said it without any affectation. By "saintliness," you didn't mean, of course, either withdrawing from the world nor piety. Nor did you encourage people "to commit themselves to a saintliness" that is individualistic, that, as Anohuil said, "is also a temptation," nor did you provide a definition. With "saintliness" I think that you were simply stating that the Church of the poor was a Church according to the Gospel. And this is not that obvious.

The Magna Carta of the Church of the Poor, you said, is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, and the saints of this Church are "the poor in spirit." The "poor" are those that are on the bottom rung of society, those that suffer, they and their children, a thousand poverties. "In the Church" refers to those who have the mission of generating life, and of seeing to it that there is peace and justice. What "saintliness" adds is doing all of this without drama, rather with simplicity; without any selfish interest, rather compassionately; without any hidden agenda or the arrogance of "always being right," rather with a merciful view.

In those days, "saintliness" was what those who were persecuted radiated because they were faithful to what Jesus says in the Bible and what Archbishop Romero said in the Cathedral. They were, and are, "saints," those who lament the cruelty of the oppressors, but who, miraculously, do not harbor a desire for vengeance and have clean hearts.

When the perversion of the world in which we live has no power over these people, the most simple ones, those who follow Jesus as a very natural thing, then the word "saintliness" takes on different tone from that which it sometimes has in the books about the saints and in the exhortations made to us regularly. It also does not have the "triumphalist" tone, which, paradoxically, and unintentionally, can pervade it in canonizations.

The "saintliness" that you spoke of that day, Ellacu, goes, I think, beyond virtue, however saintly that might be. It is more profound. It is like a reflection of the heavenly Father, "completely good," as Matthew says, "good even to the ungrateful," as Luke finishes. It is the delicacy and quality of the goodness, it is what you desired and saw in the Church of the Poor. Amid persecution and suffering, limitations and mistakes, you saw the echo of Jesus and of his God everywhere. And *that*, accompanied by liberatory praxis, is what you thought was the ultimate weapon of the Church.

I notice that there is so much emphasis on miracles, because they indicate "power." And I like to think of God smiling, whispering to human beings
"I am not about power, but rather love."

And I think I hear his wise advice:
"Look where you have witnessed love, compassion, truth and justice. Perhaps they will have to change the institutional focus of canonization, but they will discover more saints than they expected."

You also saw this reflected in other people. In the case of Archbishop Romero, it is clear. A man of prophecy and justice, a man of prayer and of faith, he radiated something very special. Paraphrasing what the letter to the Philippians says about Jesus, Monseñor [Romero] “didn’t cling to his condition and figure as archbishop, but rather, he stripped himself of his rank and took on the condition of servant, making himself one of the crowd,” like the men and women peasants of the Church of the poor.

Obviously, you admired in him his evangelizing praxis, his prophetic denunciation and his hoped-for utopia. But in Monseñor, you also saw the quality of goodness, vulnerable, a bottomless well that makes, in that way, the fascinating mystery of God present. This goodness seems to “not be worth anything,” but, with it, Monseñor Romero started a revolution that has outlived other revolutions, and the fruits of which are still present in our time. Ellacu, I think that you saw some of this in Monseñor. And you were moved by his faith.

Archbishop Romero and [others] were, then, “saints.” But, perhaps you will ask, Ellacu, and perhaps some reader will too, why talk about “saintliness” today. I see two reasons.

The first is that we are faced with a massive phenomenon of canonizations and beatifications. Well, then, what we have said will perhaps help a little to plumb the depths of all of this. As we know, “to canonize” means to “make into the norm” which has been important for many centuries to avoid



El Salvador’s martyrs include many innocent men, women, and children.

excessive enthusiasm and declaring persons saints, that sometimes may be and sometimes may not. It is good for there to be processes of canonization and for sainthood to be declared in that way.

But that is not all. The great number of canonizations and beatifications, the criteria for distributing them according to continents, religious congregations, priests and laity; discussions as to whether or not they are martyrs, understood sometimes only as whether or not they have fallen at the hands of the “enemies of the Church”; the treatment given miracles, if there were natural causes or divine intervention, the resources that are needed to achieve canonization; the politics that surrounds some of the cases. We have to add the costs of the processes, human weakness, the perception that there is publicity in favor of one candidate or another, while there is silence about others. All of this can confuse us as to what sainthood really is.

I notice, for example, that there is so much emphasis on miracles, for, it seems that only miracles show the presence of God because they indicate “power.” And I like to think of God smiling, whispering to human beings “I am not about power, but rather love.” And I think I hear his wise advice: “Look where you have witnessed love, compassion, truth and justice. Perhaps they will have to change the institutional focus of canonization, but they will discover more saints than they expected.”

I also think that it is fine to investigate the heroic virtues, that bring a great deal to our world, but without this making us forget or relegate to second place “the heroic life” of the great majority of the poor who, amid so much suffering and with a mixture of many human qualities, errors also, maintain the primary will of god: “to live.”

For us in Latin America, it is incomprehensible that not one of the thousands of martyrs—for we call them that—who have fallen because they defended justice, and, in that way, given testimony of their faith in the true God—has been canonized. Personally, I am not concerned whether they canonize Archbishop Romero or not, but, doing so would restore the dignity of many victims, would pour oil on many wounds suffered by mothers,



wives, daughters. In him, we would see thousands and thousands represented. And something we must not forget. Monseñor and so many men and women with him, were—and are—not only admired and venerated, but they are really cherished and loved. And this keeps sainthood from a possible stiffness of personal hardness and puts, in its place, nearness, affection and love.

Perhaps these reflections will help to contextualize the canonizations a little better and to understand sainthood, as the best of goodness.

The second reason is that "sainthood" reminds me of a quote from Pascal that seems to me to be very timely and very important. Distinguished scientist and distinguished humanist, he saw a difference between the spirit of geometry and the spirit of "finesness." Pascal insisted that both things are necessary, but that, in the rational period in which he lived, what was new was "the spirit of finesness."

Today, I think that there is a spirit of geometry that is necessary and good (knowledge, organization, realistic praxis, pragmatic in the best sense of the word) with which good things are produced in society. But there is also an excessive spirit of geometry that is bad and sinful, much of economics, politics, accompanied by oppression, lies and corruption, and when necessary, repression, much pragmatism without norms or values. In our world, all of this can be summarized in the words of Adolfo Perez Equivel: "capitalism was born with no heart."

I think, Ellacu, that in our world, some people—not many—try to do good geometry, but we see great cruelty and depredation of the poor peoples, lies with no shame, selfish and inhumane coalitions, trivialization, infantilizing, which are soporific and respond to the powerful of the world. Then we see very clearly that "something" greater than the spirit of geometry is needed: it is the spirit of "finesness," a clean heart and a clean gaze, whether we win or lose as a result, a hunger and thirst for justice and for every word that comes out of the mouth of God,

... "Something" greater is needed: it is the spirit of "finesness," a clean heart and a clean gaze, whether we win or lose as a result, a hunger and thirst for justice and for every word that comes out of the mouth of God, compassion in the face of the suffering of others that reaches the depths of our being...

compassion in the face of the suffering of others that reaches the depths of our being and that makes the other—not democracy, nor progress, not globalization, also not institutions, be they religious or civil, the be-all-and-end-all, what blesses us and gives us salvation.

The spirit of "finesness" is what many good people we do not even know radiate—the willingness to serve—not servility—of many simple people and of people more well-known. The spirit of finesness is that which, in order to do good, does not have to resort to norms, canons, international conventions, constitutions, as the ultimate, but rather, in a definitive way, intercedes for the "authority of those who suffer," and responds to it. This spirit of finesness is what surrounded Mons. Romero, when

he said "with such a people, it is not hard to be a good shepherd." And he was not doing this to get votes, but rather out of a deep conviction.

And, if you will allow me, I want to recall two of your moments of "finesness." You didn't much like to seem "good"—although you did like for people to see you as "just"—and intelligent. But, I remember one time, when, with great simplicity, and with no false note, you said "I don't hate anyone." You said it very naturally, and in speaking of an interview with Robert D'Aubisson. Also, the time you recalled a saying of St. Augustine's that "to be a man, you have to be more than a man."

Dear Ellacu, we are in great need of saintliness and finesness. The U.N. Human Development Index is good, but it does not measure such realities, or whether the trend is up or down. And, even so, we continue to live off the goodness stored up in history, your goodness, that of Amando and Lolo, Juan Ramon and Nacho, Elba and Celina, Segundo Montes and yours, Ellacu, and that of many others. You added some—a great deal—of the spirit of finesness and in our world and in our Church. Using that as a base, we build our hope and we continue working for the kingdom. For that, we thank you and remember you.

Jon ✝

Meet the CRISPAZ Staff!



Patty Adams
El Salvador Encounter Co-Coordinator

I began working with CRISPAZ in March of 2003. My work with CRISPAZ reflects my dedication to accompaniment through processes of transformation and renewal. I strive in my work towards building a world centered by a spirituality of nonviolence, compassionate love, and inclusive peace. I am a definite lover of the world and all things within it.



Rosa Anaya
Alternatives for High-Risk Youth Coordinator

In my nearly three years of working with CRISPAZ, I have found a way to follow the example of my parents. I have found people unique in their nature of love and commitment. I have learned to become indignant in the face of injustice, to allow that indignation to become an action for change. We work with those that the rest have forgotten and made invisible, not as an act of charity but rather because all of us, without exception, are human beings that deserve respect and who are called to respect the miracle of life in all of its forms.



Lynnette Arnold
Human Resources Coordinator

When I first came to El Salvador as a CRISPAZ volunteer in the fall of 2001, I had no idea what awaited me. The Salvadoran reality stretched my heart and mind, opened my eyes, and changed my life forever. Now – three years later – I am still here, seeking to share my experience and encouraging others to accompany the Salvadoran people.



Kelly Creedon
Communications Coordinator

I was born and raised in Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey, and have been in El Salvador working with CRISPAZ since September of 2000. I spent my first two years here volunteering in a community radio station and learning boatloads about participative grassroots media. These days I split my time between writing for Salvanet, being the CRISPAZ web mistress, and cultivating papayas in the pleated skirt of the San Salvador volcano.



Brendan Goodwin
Economics for People Coordinator

I first started with CRISPAZ as a summer intern in El Salvador in 2000 and have recently returned as a full-time staff member in Boston. CRISPAZ has afforded me the great opportunity to use my business education in a way that puts people, not profits, first through the promotion of fair trade. I continue to be amazed by the strength and devotion of the people of El Salvador as I work with the artisan groups.



Elizabeth Hernández Martínez
Office Administrator

I am originally from Ciudad Delgado, San Salvador. I have been part of the CRISPAZ family for 7 years, during which time I have learned a lot about U.S. culture. Being in CRISPAZ has been a great experience culturally and spiritually and has helped raise my consciousness. Most importantly, CRISPAZ has been a means to meet and establish strong ties of friendship with many people that have been part of and, although they are far away, will continue to be part of CRISPAZ.



Chris Ney
U.S. Country Coordinator

I've been passionate about Latin America since taking a trip to Mexico with my high school Spanish class more than 20 years ago. Many short trips, special projects, and foreign study experiences since then have shaped my professional life and faith journey. Since joining the CRISPAZ staff in 2002, I've had the opportunity to do solidarity work full-time, deepen my understanding of El Salvador, develop new skills and integrate my interests in theology, social justice, and fundraising.



Eduardo Perdomo
Receptionist

I am 23 years old and have one daughter. I grew up and live in the department of San Salvador. I have been working as a receptionist in CRISPAZ for about four years. In that time I have seen and had the opportunity to relate with many different kinds of souls, or people. My time in the organization has been very pleasant.

Jenny Peirce
El Salvador Encounter Delegation Assistant

After travelling on my own through Mexico and Central America this year, I started working with CRISPAZ in May. Here I have found concrete ways to live out the principles of non-violence and community. The many wonderful Crispaz and Salvadoran people have inspired me to continue working for justice and peace in a world that sometimes seems to be disintegrating. Each day I find new windows on our realities and constant expressions of the love that must hold us together.



Cristina Flores de Pineda
El Salvador Encounter Program Assistant

I am from San Salvador and I have two children. I have been working with CRISPAZ since January of 2004. I feel fortunate and satisfied because I have the opportunity to interact and share with many people from different cultures and at the same time contribute just one grain of corn to the mission of CRISPAZ in accompaniment and solidarity with the poor and marginalized of El Salvador.



Jeanne Ridders
El Salvador Country Coordinator

Although I'm originally from Minnesota, I have found my home here in El Salvador. I live with my husband, three children, three step-children, a dog, a cat, and some fish. My work with CRISPAZ over the past eight years has brought together several of my passions....peace and justice, solidarity, and bridges between cultures.



Javier Rivera
Rural Community Accompaniment Coordinator

I come from a beautiful indigenous *puebl* named Panchimalco. My profession as an environmental educator has led me to work in the struggle against genetically-modified organisms and to form part of the national movement working to demystify free trade and its impact on El Salvador. In the Rural Accompaniment Program we work to accompany the efforts being made by our sister communities and organizations towards the construction of a different world.



Denise Whall
El Salvador Encounter Intern

I am originally from Boston (Dorchester), Massachusetts and go to Fordham University in the Bronx, where I will be a junior in the fall. I am here in the search of truth, justice, and solidarity of the people of El Salvador, who show and teach me and allow me new experiences every day. And so I can tell people I have the coolest summer job ever.



Erin Yost
El Salvador Encounter Co-Coordinator

I'm from the small, rural town of Mayfield, New York originally and came to live in El Salvador in April of 2002 to work for CRISPAZ. While living and working in El Salvador has been challenging, it has also been an incredible journey of faith and love. I am continually inspired by the spirit of the Salvadoran people, and their commitment to transforming their society into one that is rooted in justice. ¡La lucha sigue!



CRISPAZ has four focus areas:

- † Economics for People
- † Rural Community Accompaniment
- † South North Solidarity
- † Alternatives for High-Risk Youth

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CRISPAZ relies on your contributions to produce this publication and to continue its accompaniment with the Salvadoran people.

All contributions are tax deductible.

For more information about our programs or to make a contribution, please contact us at:

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Our New Website Launch & a Special Thank You!

CRISPAZ is proud to announce the launch of our new and improved website; please come take a look!

www.crispaz.org

We'd also like to take our hats off to Kore Peterson, whose generously donated time, energy, and technical expertise made this website project possible!
Thank you Kore!!



If you liked an article that you read in **Salvanet**, we encourage you to share it with others in your publication.

Please cite CRISPAZ as the source.

Attention El Salvador Encounter Participants!

In our 20 years of leading delegations, we have seen thousands of delegates challenged, awakened, saddened, enlivened, angered, and filled with joy through their encounter with the Salvadoran people.

On the occasion of our 20th anniversary, we'd like to bring some of those experiences together to share part of this journey with our CRISPAZ community.

CRISPAZ is looking to collect photos, essays, articles, and links to homepages that reflect the experiences of our El Salvador Encounter participants.

If you have photos, reflections, articles, links, or other material created out of an El Salvador Encounter, please share it with us!
You can send it to us at salvanet@crispaz.org!

Thanks for sharing with us!!

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