



MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

SISTERS & ASSOCIATES



MAY 2019

Promising Radical Hospitality

by Sister Marilyn Breen

The first disciples, called by Jesus to be part of something greater, “immediately left their nets and followed him.” (*Mark 1:18*) Responding to the Lord’s call involves putting ourselves on the line and facing a great challenge. It means being ready to leave behind whatever would keep us tied to our little boat and prevent us from making a definitive choice. We are called to be bold and decisive in seeking God’s plan for our lives. Gazing out at the vast “ocean” of vocation, we cannot remain content to repair our nets on the boat that gives us security, but must trust instead in the Lord’s promise ... *Pope Francis, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, 2019*

Trust in the Lord's promise. What does this mean for us in 2019? We have made promises which move us to radical hospitality. I imagine Nano Nagle and Mother Vincent as bold and decisive, but what about us? Are our actions marked by the same courage and faithfulness. We are always changing, growing, becoming.

Might radical hospitality be found in. . .

- The compassion shown those who need assistance with daily activities.
- Standing with the victims to gun violence.
- The courage and generosity of those who are willing to travel to El Paso, Nogales, and other places where refugees are in need.
- Welcoming women, men and children to celebrate and pray with us.
- The garage sale experience of service and welcome.
- Recognizing our white privilege and opening our eyes to racism.
- Welcoming others and not asking everyone to be like us.
- What would you add?

What nets are we asked to leave behind in order to be part of something greater?

**Do you have a story to share
about radical hospitality?**

Email your story to:

jane@dubuquepresentations.org



¿QUÉ TAL, BOLIVIA?

[WHAT'S HAPPENING, BOLIVIA?]

Two Incredible Women

A visit to Vallecito Marquez, a very isolated community in O'Connor Province (nearly eight hours from Entre Ríos), allowed Sister Mery Cari Paz the opportunity to get acquainted with two exemplary women. Palmira Romero and Nilda Ordoñez struggle day after day to support their families. Although they are not related, they share similar histories: as small children they grew up without their parents, they suffered labor exploitation and were unable to attend school, except for second or third grade. Even as young women, their lives were not free of suffering. They are now in their mid 30's and both with children. Although they have spouses, both women assume leadership in their homes: searching to better their economic situation, seeking education for their children and facing the injustice in their community. Unfortunately, there are two powerful families that try to control life in the local community. Palmira and Nilda are marginalized, treated as outsiders for not being related to these families.

They travel by foot or, at times, by horseback, frequently with a donkey or two carrying their loads on very narrow mountainous paths. With a machete (large knife) in hand, they cut the branches that impede their passing. It is very dangerous, especially during the rainy season, to cross the rivers and to walk the muddy, slippery paths. Another danger to take into account is all the bugs that swarm around; worse yet, are the polvorin (tiny bugs) that climb inside clothes and shoes, biting all over.

Through all this harsh reality, they lighten their loads by helping each other. Amidst the hard manual labor, they live a very simple, austere life, showing tremendous hospitality to whoever visits them. Above all, they are women of deep faith.



Palmira and her children



Nilda in her Kitchen



Palmira and Nilda

Hermanas Therese Corkery, Suzanne Takes, Mery Cari Paz and Marge Healy



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April Showers Bring May Flowers - Events at Presentation Lantern Center

In April, students and volunteers attended the 2019 opening of the Millwork Night Market, a Dubuque farmer's market which takes place near the Lantern Center. Students, their children and volunteers enjoyed venturing out to see the hand-crafted goods, learned to play the game, Ninja, and were warmed with hot chocolate from Charlotte's cafe.

At the fifth annual "Celebrating Africa and the Diaspora," former students expressed their gratitude for what the center has provided to them, and said they will soon be bringing down relatives new to Iowa who will benefit from Lantern Center tutoring. The fun evening closed with a fashion show and a variety of guest speakers, including a keynote by three women who run an organization similar to the Presentation Lantern Center for immigrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo: www.congogirlsunited.org.

Tutoring is a continuous event. International students from Divine Word College, Clarke University and the University of Wisconsin-Platteville also shared interest in summer tutoring. A handful of professors and K-12 teachers plan to bring their classes to learn more and to meet some of the diverse groups of students and volunteers that make the center unique and exciting.

On May Day, we had an international potluck with University of Dubuque student volunteers and Lantern Center students. We were impressed with people's culinary skills and what they brought to share. Two of our students from China did a cooking demonstration on how to make Chinese crepes/pancakes, filled with a savory soy-based sauce, fresh cilantro and green onions! A student from Brazil made fried pastel, a pocket pastry with cheese inside. University students made American favorites, from Scotcherros and pickle rolls, to salads and cake balls.



Top: Students, tutors and their children learning the game "Ninja" at Millwork Market. Left: Language learners from China give a cooking demonstration on how to make savory pancakes with cilantro and green onions.



Enjoying an international potluck on May Day!



Yecenia Andrade, a third-year student from Wartburg college, is no stranger to reaching out to communities about important health concerns. Her previous experience at other internship sites made her an ideal candidate for a La Luz Hispana intern. As a student majoring in Spanish and Public Health, Yeci repeatedly put to use what she was learning in her classes. Her culminating project was a community health presentation.

Area health professionals pointed to oral hygiene, breast cancer and cervical cancer as the top three health concerns (after diabetes) for Latinos in the Franklin County area. Yeci presented a workshop in Spanish about these three key areas. This workshop was open to the public and those who came were surprised at some of the information and what they learned.

The presentations were highly interactive and made the participants consider their risks and prevention strategies. The participants had excellent questions and shared important stories about personal impacts from these health concerns. The welcoming environment led to some questions that had gone unanswered for a long time, because the people had not been comfortable asking them previously. The workshop gave participants the opportunity to express themselves and learn in an interactive and engaging manner. At the end, there was a short quiz. We are glad to say we were attentive participants and all of us passed!

Sadly, this event was the end of Yeci's time with us. She did a wonderful job on her projects and the community loved her. We will certainly miss her sunny disposition, but wish her well in her future endeavors and dreams!

Summer Volunteers for ELL Tutoring

As summer rapidly approaches, English classes will be put on hold. However, our students are eager to continue practicing their skills and learning how to better communicate with the English-speaking community. This summer, La Luz Hispana is searching for tutors willing to assist these language learners.

While tutoring English may sound daunting, most students simply want practice talking. Our hope is to pair tutors and language learners as neighbors getting to know one another, rather than as formal teachers and students. With students in Hampton, Latimer, Dows, Belmond, Iowa Falls and Allison, there are many potential neighbors out there!

We are excited to already have three tutors interested in this relational volunteer work! All three have expressed interest in practicing Spanish, too. Their paired students were thrilled to hear of this interest. This kind of language exchange is exactly what we hope will happen through these connections. We hope to recruit more volunteers for other interested students soon. Volunteers are vital to our mission and we appreciate all the extra work they do!