

A Ministry of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Winter 2023

FIAT *Happenings*





HANDMAIDS OF THE
SACRED HEART OF JESUS
US PROVINCE



December 4, 2023

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

- Oscar Romero's prayer by Ken Untener

Dear Supporters and Friends of our Shared Mission,

For nearly 20 years, we have had the immense privilege of walking with our Salvadoran brothers and sisters through Project FIAT, building relationships, lightening heavy loads and bearing witness to the dignity and value of each person. The encounters and relationships formed through this mission have enriched and challenged us and called us out beyond ourselves, revealing God's face time and again. Many enduring lessons and still more friendships have been borne of our shared mission. For these and for the ways in which Project FIAT has elevated and encouraged our brothers and sisters who face daily struggle, I am deeply grateful.

After some years of discernment and a year of comprehensive evaluation, we have come to the conclusion that it is time to bring Project FIAT to completion. Working with an auditor and various other professionals, we have examined the Project's sustainability, effectiveness, efficiency, and operations. Considering the new laws and regulations for ministries in El Salvador and reflecting upon the reality of our Province, we recognize that we do not have enough hands to continue the physical in-country support of the Project and responsibly manage the operations from the United States. Within the Province, our 28 sisters are invested in continued formation and growing our ministries in Athens, St. Louis, Wyncote and Haverford.

We know that Project FIAT has been deeply transformative for the volunteers who have stepped into encounter, service, learning and prayer at the Volunteer House since 2004. God has worked through this ministry, engaging many hands and hearts in the process. Through the labor of staff, volunteers and Sisters, and the generosity of many donors, God has eased burdens and opened opportunities for many people. I am filled with wonder as I consider how many people have collaborated in this work of solidarity and compassion, sharing time and resources and growing in a faith that does justice. THANK YOU for your part in that!

Although Project FIAT will close, the house will remain as a place of ministry and the charism of reparation and healing will continue to flourish through SERPAZ (Asociación Cooperativa de Servicios Profesionales por la Paz/Cooperative Association Professional Services for Peace). SERPAZ will use the house to foster peace and reconciliation through a culture of reparation, dialogue, care and justice among individuals, groups and with the environment. On December 7, SERPAZ will hold a constitutive assembly to elect their board, define committees and sign the statutes. Our prayers are with SERPAZ and we ask that God bless their work with those marginalized and impacted by violence.



It is impossible to name all of those who have contributed to this mission, but we extend deep gratitude to Lynette Kyle for her years of dedicated and loving service. Lynette's commitment and witness of steadfast availability, compassion and attentive care for both volunteers and the people served by Project FIAT has been totally essential throughout Project FIAT's history. She is currently exploring a new avenue for offering service opportunities in El Salvador. Warm thanks to the entire Project FIAT staff for their care, time, talent and patience; to all the Project FIAT volunteers, benefactors and friends for your trust, love, labor and large-hearted generosity. Thank you for allowing your hearts to be broken and healed through your encounters and for healing many hearts with your reverent presence, efforts and generosity. We honor, as well, the contribution of many Sisters, in a special way Sisters Sagrario and Dona, who initiated the Project, and Sister Gloria, who, together with Lynette, grew it to maturity and lovingly sustained it over many years. Project FIAT was a labor of love and a source of abundant joy for Gloria and she looked forward to every opportunity to return to El Salvador and to the people and mission that gave her so much life.

*"...We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest."
- Oscar Romero's prayer by Ken Untener*

The decision to bring Project FIAT to completion on December 31 has been a difficult one for all of us who care deeply about this work and about the people we serve. We pray that our letting go will open space for "God's grace to enter and do the rest."

I know that, for many of you, Project FIAT was your first contact with the Handmaids, and I am deeply grateful for the way in which so many of those friendships have deepened and grown over the years. Please know that you and your families remain in my and our prayers. We hope that you will remain in touch and stay connected to the Handmaids' mission of reparation and healing, whether in the US or elsewhere. May we pray together during this season of transition, that God continue to raise up those who will water the seeds we have planted with love and bless God's people in El Salvador. May God bless you and grant you the hope and wonder of the Advent season.

United in God's Heart,

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In Remembrance of...



Thank you
for your continued
support to the ministries of
the Handmaids!



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