

CENTRO SANTA CATALINA

FOR EACH WOMAN, EVERY FAMILY, AND THE COMMUNITY

April 2011

OPENING OUR HEARTS AND HOME TO GUESTS

The violence in Juarez has made visitors to the Center a rarity but in March we hosted a group of students from Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Kentucky as well as Sisters Margaret Ormond, OP (Prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Peace) and Valerie Shaul, OP, from Columbus, Ohio.

The collegians from Thomas More came with a professor who has been bringing students to the Center for the past ten years. The women of the sewing cooperative welcomed them all with joy and shared stories about their own lives, the history of the colonia and the Center as well as all its programs. They also welcomed questions from the guests. The professor asked the last question, "What message do you want us to carry back to Kentucky with us?" Here are some of the women's responses:

- ◆ *Tell the people there that the only thing the media covers is all the violence in Juarez. They don't tell you about all the good people here and places like this Center that make a difference in our lives.*
- ◆ *Tell them that the murders are not the only violence here. We also suffer the violence of hunger and poverty. Many people eat only one meal a day now because there is no work.*
- ◆ *Let people know how important education is to us and our children. It's only by keeping our children in school that we can keep them away from the violence. This Center helps us do that.*
- ◆ *We want you to thank your college and your parents for letting you visit us! Thank you for believing in us!*
- ◆ *Remember that the United States has a share in our problems. The weapons being used by the murderers come from the US; the drugs that are being sold go to markets in the US. We didn't create this problem by ourselves and we can't solve it alone.*
- ◆ *As you see, we are women of faith and hope and courage. We find the strength to continue in the struggle because of the support we find in our community here. We know how to laugh and we know how to cry and we know how to do it together. Our work in the cooperative is not a burden; it is a joy because we work as a community.*



As the students prepared to leave the women blessed them individually with prayer and song. Many of the students were visibly moved by the experience; more than one left with tears in his/her eyes.

Sisters Margaret and Valerie met the teachers of the women's spirituality and leadership program as well as the kindergarten teachers and students. Upon returning to Columbus Sister Margaret said, "I was inspired by the apostolic zeal of the three Dominican Sisters ministering at Centro Santa Catalina. The sisters provide a variety of services for women and children amidst overwhelming difficulties. For example, one parent came to the school office to tell the staff that her husband had been murdered over the weekend. Seeing the compassion of Dominic made manifest in these sisters made me proud to be one of them. I was especially moved by the joy of the youngsters in the classes and the women in the spirituality course; it was contagious!"



Sister Margaret Ormond with three of the Values, Faith and Life teachers



Sister Valerie receiving ashes at the Center's Ash Wednesday celebration.

CSC WISH LIST:

- Bibles for the women in the third year of Valores, Fe y Vida \$200
- Cash donations for the scholarship fund for the children. In June we need \$6,000 total to pay the family scholarships—\$25 for primary school and \$50 for secondary.

Please consider being a monthly or quarterly donor. Special thanks to all who already are!!!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

We are very excited to tell you that our website (www.centrosantacatalina.org) has undergone a thorough redesign. If you haven't visited it for a while we think you will enjoy the new look. You can now find current news of the Center's activities as well as stories of some of the women. All the sewing cooperative's products are pictured on the website, including some new products. Purchases can be made and donations accepted using PayPal.

We are very grateful to Scott Steinkerchner, OP, for providing valuable technical assistance with the new site. (He was also a big hit with the kinder children when he visited the Center. They wanted him to stay forever!)



Scott Steinkerchner, OP, with some of his new friends

La esperanza no es pan pero alimenta.
 Hope is not bread but it nourishes us.
 (Mexican saying)