

TidBytes for December 2019

News from Johnelle in Great Falls, MT

Sister Johnelle, Lissie and friend Gayla Bastas attended the Barry Beach Christmas Reunion Celebration held at Jakers December 11th. Coming from Billings, Barry joined us to celebrate 4 years of freedom from an unjust incarceration.

Caridad Inda in Mexico

There really are no news but I will comment on a cultural customs:

After the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on the 12th of December and until the feast of the Three Kings on January 6th, there is a long PAUSE known locally as the Guadalupe Reyes Bridge., el PUENTE GUADALUPE REYES It is in fact a couple of weeks when not much gets done. It is not officially vacation time and the stores and businesses are sort of working, but often with a reduced staff so every transaction takes longer or has to be attempted several times. I understand it as a way in which our Catholic culture effectively hangs on to the daily life of many Mexicans. In a way it is a reminder of earlier times when the social and church life of the greater community dictated church-related activities such as the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, often with a pageant at each parish, the early morning songs and noise makers and a day full of Masses at the local shrine, each sponsored by a different group: taxi drivers, bus drivers, business men, guilds of every sort. women's groups, sodalities, etc., etc. If this occurs in our local diocese, you can imagine what the festivities at the main shrine of Our Lady, where the miraculous image is venerated, look and feel like. This year more **than ten million pilgrims paid their visit to the miraculous image.**

Next comes Christmas and the laying down of the Christ Child on the manger where a nativity scene has been set up. In more traditional households it is the Kings that bring the gifts. Otherwise, Santa Claus has taken over making visiting the stores and malls a real nightmare! People with means copy the US custom of ordering the food prepared or catered for the Christmas supper. More traditional and poorer people still go to the market and buy the materials to cook for that night's supper. The special dishes are different from yours, usually not scalloped potatoes or green bean casseroles. I went with a friend for lunch last week. She wanted to enjoy a meal served only on Tuesdays and Thursdays of November. It was a Thanksgiving supper with the basic turkey, stuffing, and gravy. It was good. The restaurant owner told us it was his mother's recipe. I think the name was Taylor!

Right now, from December 16th to the 24th people celebrate the Posadas. The original posada was a way to remember Joseph and Mary's trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem and the fact there was no room in the inn. Now it is mostly an opportunity for having a party, breaking the piñata and enjoying the refreshments. The original piñatas always had seven cones sticking out like a star. The idea of the friars who invented this exercise was that people would beat the piñata because it *represented the 7 deadly sins* and when they broke it they were rewarded with the fruit and candy that it held. This custom has also become degraded to a regular party and piñatas now represent Mickey Mouse or Darth Vader or some other hero of the young!

From Kathryn O'Meara Ashburn VA

I've attended a parish women's retreat based on the book of Fulton J. Sheen, "Way to Inner Peace", and attended the Loudon Co. Symphony's Christmas concert; and will spend Christmas celebrating at my nephew & family's home with sister & husband.

From HMC Davenport

We are enjoying the Christmas customs and decorations all over the house, the work of many Sisters and employees. And the food is delicious, prepared with love by many. Thanks for all that on behind the scenes! Read Mary Ann's updates for latest news!!