



PazSalud brigada de ojos agosto 2006
Surgical Eye Brigade August 2006
Lanetta Lundberg

Sunday, August 13

Sunday was a relaxing day attending mass at the Cathedral, viewing the crypt encasing the remains of Monsignor Oscar Romero, viewing the many Salvadorans expressing profound emotion when kneeling in prayer at the crypt and feeling the strong religious community.



El Salvador is a country of faith.

After mass we went to the art gallery of Fernando Llorca, the country's famous contemporary artist. He is world renowned for his contemporary art, which also adorns the twin towers of the Cathedral in San Salvador.



Our afternoon was spent shopping at the cooperative open air market, viewing the Siman Mansion embedded inside the Siman Mall, driving by the US Embassy and doing a bit more sight seeing of the city.

We finished out time in San Salvador with Sr. Eleanor hosting us at her home for the evening. It is a comfort knowing Sr. Eleanor is secure and has the simple amenities necessary to carry on her life's work. It also is amazing that she is on the PeaceHealth intranet and only an E-mail away. When we were visiting she was troubleshooting with our PeaceHealth help desk!!

Monday, August 14: Travel home. We had heard on the previous Thursday that there was a terrorist threat originating in London and all airports in the US were on red alert. We weren't sure what this meant for us as international travelers. A couple of us called family in the states and with the news so fresh, there were a lot of rumors floating around. We prepared for the worst and packed our luggage accordingly. I was very nervous about the electronics and the photographs. It would have been a big disappointment, to say the least, if we lost the photos from the brigade. It wasn't until I checked in at the airport I learned I could take the laptop and cameras with me as a carry-on. I was very thankful. Security was uneventful although Hilda did get stopped because her rolled up mosquito net looked a bit unusual.

From San Salvador to Houston I enjoyed visiting with GloryBelle – a Salvadorian living in Houston on her return from visiting her family in San Salvador. She mentioned that a General Practice doctor makes \$20 a day, a gallon of Mazola costs \$13, milk is \$5.50 a gallon, gas is \$3.64 a gallon, guards make \$6/day for a 12 hour day with no breaks.

GloryBelle has a cousin who is a RN and can't get a job because there are no jobs for RNs – she is working at a KINKOS. This made sense when we also learned that under the national health care system each hospital administrator is given a budget tied to interesting incentives. These “incentives” are well worth achieving for the administrator, but the off-set is to manage on a tight purse-string. As a result the country experiences a lack of staff, facility repairs and equipment.

Another interesting thing that happens when traveling from San Salvador to Houston is the amount of Pollo Campero that boards the plane. The Salvadorians bring this fast food on the airplane early in the morning to take back to the states. Why? GloryBelle said it

is because of the spices. The spices are only found in El Salvador. They aren't the same ones used in the Pollo Campero fast food franchises found in the states. It is almost like a status symbol to bring back the Salvadorian fast food, Pollo Campero. The side effect to this popular activity is the smell that permeates the coach cabin so early in the morning.