



Grace Church of West Feliciana Parish

"A loving congregation seeking unity with God and each other in Christ"

Newsletter for
July 24 and 31, 2016

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A Week Full of Resurrection Stories

I had been dying to go to Cartagena, Colombia, ever since I re-read and did a presentation of "Love in the Time of Cholera" for the Classics Book Club here in town. Even though Gabriel Garcia Marquez never mentions the name of the city where the story takes place, everybody knows Cartagena was his inspiration. I wanted to see the walled city and the fishing peers, the convent where Fermina Daza went to secondary school, the parks where the young Florentino Ariza played his sad music, hoping to get a glance of the girl, the local hospital where Dr. Juvenal Urbino practiced medicine. In short, I wanted to breathe the same air and walk the same streets as the beloved characters of the book.

Even though I was born in Colombia, I had never been able to go to the coast. It was too dangerous back then. The cartels were busy killing police and judges, street violence had spilled into the local villages and towns, kidnaping for ransom was common almost everywhere, the number of innocent people caught in the crossfire was extremely high, and everybody lived in a state of constant paranoia. Going to Cartagena when I was a boy was just out of the question.

The first thing I noticed on my first day in the walled city was the number of accents. Europeans, Americans, many Brazilians, Asians, and tourists from the interior of the country could be found everywhere. The second thing I noticed was the number of street vendors and the delicious foods they were selling. Cartagena is one of those cities where the locals actually recommend the street vendors and many of their customers are foreigners. My wife and I got busy trying every available street vendor's food and we ate our way through the city, encountering many of the same tourists at various vendor stalls. The city has done a great job ensuring food safety, hygiene, and variety.

The third thing I noticed, and this is one of those resurrection stories I never thought I would live to see, was how safe the walled city was. We walked everywhere, at all hours of the day and night and there was not even a moment when we felt unsafe. The city has followed many areas of the country in ensuring safety and protection for its citizens. This is evident by the amount of high rise condominium towers being built all around the walled city. Construction within the walls is very limited and highly controlled by historical societies, foundations, and the government. Just outside the walls, however, especially along the beach, we saw dozens of beautiful towers being built, alongside beautiful hotels and resorts. Many affluent Colombians are returning from the United States, Canada, and Europe and they are purchasing these new apartments.

Now, not everything is glitz and glamour. Just a few miles outside of Cartagena there is another world most tourists are not shown, but my wife and I felt we had to see. And here I will proudly tell you another resurrection story. There is a working

class neighborhood outside the city called “7 de Agosto” (August 7) which is a famous historical date in Colombia’s fight for independence from Spain in the early 1800’s. The uncomfortable taxi driver could not understand why I wanted him to take us there, but I insisted and offered to pay him more money. The town looked poor, filled with humble cement homes, dusty streets, and semi-naked kids playing on the streets. The driver told us there were 87 different gangs in the town and they all fought for turf. There were constant gun fights, almost every night, many leading to death. He believed that many of the residents were addicted to drugs. The police was afraid to enter the town, he told us, even though it had done a good job containing the danger from spilling into the city or other “affluent” towns. It had done this by building police stations at crucial points outside the periphery of the town.

Finally, to our driver’s relief, we arrived at our destination: Iglesia de la Santa Cruz, one of three Episcopal Churches in Cartagena. A small cement structure built right in the middle of a busy street, in a dangerous town and proudly flying the Episcopal flag. Located in an area where not even the Catholic Church has a presence, the church is a symbol of the loving power of Christian outreach. I got out of the taxi and knocked on the rectory’s door. The priest, somewhat startled to find a tourist at his door, quickly invited us into his church, while the taxi driver waited in his car anxiously. In a few minutes, the priest told us about his ministry of counseling the many addicted parishioners, the movies he projects on a small screen to get the kids off the streets, the many funerals of young gang members he has performed in the last year, the great excitement of leading some dangerous people to Christ and then seeing them change their lives, the danger in which he lives and ministers, and, yet, the joy of being able to preach the Gospel to this “abandoned town” as he called it. He then asked us to go to church in the city, hinting that we would not be safe if we came to church at Iglesia de la Santa Cruz.

The Church the priest sent us to is in a middle class part of the city, across from a famous mall. The church itself is small, but it is well located in a safe part of town. We attended the church on Sunday morning and were immediately surrounded by amazing hospitality. The Rector of Iglesia de Nuestro Salvador is Fr. Rafael Abuchar Cury, a tall elegant man with olive skin and blue eyes. He is the descendant of Lebanese immigrants who settled in Cartagena after World War I. We struck up a friendship almost immediately and Chris and I took him and his family (Wife and three daughters) to dinner on our last night in the area. He works long hours, gets paid less than \$400 dollars a month, has the same responsibilities of any rector of a mid-size congregation in our Diocese, and is one of the most joyous men I have ever met. In love with the Lord, a servant to his people, a great dad, and a devoted husband. He has been the rector at Nuestro Salvador for 3 years, having served and started many of the ministries at “7 de Agosto” for 10 years. When we left him and his beautiful family we took with us his friendship and an open invitation for Grace to come on mission in 2018. The church has hosted many mission teams from the Diocese of Connecticut, which has been a companion Diocese to Colombia for many years.

There is one last miracle I want to tell you about. We are a universal church and, no matter where we are, our liturgy, ministry, and shared sense of mission unites us as one family. This is very mysterious and beautiful. On Sunday morning at 10:00AM, my wife and I were repeating the same prayers you all were praying and, even though we were surrounded by people who looked differently and spoke a different language, when I closed my eyes I was here with you all, and yet, there with them. Both worlds united miraculously by a common liturgy and a common love for our Lord. I could not think of anything more sacred than a liturgy and tradition that crosses all boundaries of ethnicity, culture, wealth, and history.

Please pray for our new friends in Colombia. Let me know if you want to help them in their ministry. Blessings to you, Fr. Roldan+

Intercessory prayers are asked for Grace Church members who are ill:

David Barnes, George Black, Wayne Blake, Cecil May Dwyer, Tom Morris, Sara Nelson, Jim Roland, Margie Sheets, Wendell Wade, Pam Willson, Jake Wray, Madeline Wright.

Birthdays

Danielle Betz, Jeanne Morris-July 24; Al Hardouin-July 25; Stephanie Powers, Molly McGraw-July 26; Charles Jenkins, Ronnie Martin-July 27; Christian Tregle-July 28; Elizabeth Hughes, Brooks Barnes, Ashley Fox-Smith-July 29; Debbie Thomas, Emily Fusilier-July 30; Hannah and Hunter Adams, Michael McIntyre-July 31; Steve Parnell, Dora Metz, Sophie Dowd-Aug. 1; Davis F. Bankston, Lilli Higgins-Aug. 2; Bert Babers, Hutch McClendon-Aug.3; Madeleine Kane, Ella Corinne Howle-Aug. 4; Joey Gammill, Sara Roldan, Sean McKenzie, Brandie Olsen-Aug. 5; Louise Reichman, Liz Truitt-Aug. 6.

Wedding

Anniversaries

Ronnie and Pat Martin, David & Beverly Walker-July 26; Tom & Jeanne Morris, Jim & Susan Roland-July 28; David & Jane Opperman-Aug. 4; Joe & Maria Gerry, Neil & Becky Wright-Aug. 5.

Other persons prayers are asked for:

Charles Barham, Walker Bell, Jolie Berry, Tommy Bishop, Phillip Bowen, Leo Brown, Ben Brown, Steve Brown, Willie Bryant, Randy Bryant, John Caruthers, Jenny Clark, Kitty Claus, Kathleen Davis, Debbie Desmar, Helen Desselles, Molly Douglas, Mark Ellison, Jennifer Erickson, Mark Feltner, Juanita Ferguson, Dennis Flynn, Matthew Gill, Roy Hardin, Parke Henderson, Elmo Hegwood, Wayne Hudnall, Joel James, Jill Joffrion, Mary Jo Kaly, Cecil Kelly, Jody Lemoine, Bob Lewis, Jessica Liddle, Max, Paul McGuff, Ralph McKenzie, Laine Martrain, Mary Anne McCrory, Ruby McKee, Robin Michel, Dorothy Anne Millikin, Jim Mire, Jimmy Mitchell, Rusty Melton, Alice Mier, Mike Morris, Randall Nachman, Barton Platte, Susanna Prescott, Peter Purpera, Carol Ratcliff, Tammy Riggs, Stephen Seale, Gwin Shanks, Kaizlyn Shockley, Cade Stapleton, Glenn Thomas III, Terri Thompson, Denham Turner, Darold Whitmer, Zane Woodward.

Those serving in the

armed forces: Parker Blanche, Amanda Browning, James Boucher, Jay Christopher, Ryan Coacher, Ben Colia, John Davis, Joseph Dooley, Bryan Geltz, Edward Jenkins, Laura Latson, Shawn Lemons, Terry Palmer, James Powers, Jeff Ragusa, Christopher Willis, Matthew Young, 745th & 746th Exped Squads, 379th & 926th Exped. Support Squads.

An Evening of Vocal Music: This Friday, July 22, Anna's Place NOLA Children's Choir and the Treme' Community Choir, will present an evening of music representing a variety of styles ranging from folk to classical to Broadway. We have funded the Saint Anna's Arts for Kids since 2012 and will see the fruits of our contributions and prayers. Join us in Grace Church at 6pm to hear these amazing groups perform. This is a free event and open to the public. Invite your friends.

Honduras Mission, First Meeting: On Thursday, July 28 at 6:00PM Fr. Roldan will host a first meeting for those wanting to go on Mission to Honduras from January 9-16, 2017. If you are going or if you are curious and want to explore the possibility of going, please plan to be here. If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Roldan directly.

Please continue to pray for all victims of senseless violence: These last few weeks have been extremely sad for most of us. The senseless violence we see often around the world has come so near to us that many of us are deeply worried about the future of our State and Country. Please continue to pray for all the victims and pray for peace and reconciliation. Please know that I am here if you would like to talk or pray. Blessings, Fr. Roldan+

"Over 50" Trip: Breakfast at Café des Amis: and dancing to the Zydeco music! Join the group as they travel to Breaux Bridge on Saturday, July 30 to have a breakfast at Café' Des Amis and listen to the Zydeco band. You can even try dancing to the Zydeco music. It will be a fun atmosphere and great food. We will leave Grace Church parking lot at 7am with transportation provided by the church. Sign the list in the Narthex.

The Fall Bible Study will begin at 9:00 a.m. on September 7, the Wednesday following Labor Day. This one is an excellent one by Kathleen Norris called "Embracing a Life of Meaning." It is a five-week study, and each week centers on a special subject that is related to having a life of meaning, e.g., the Bible, Community, Place, etc. The format is like that of the Forgiveness Study we did a while back, and, similarly, the DVD was created at St. John's Anglican Church in Denver. The Bible Study Committee will facilitate this study. Please consider joining us on these Wednesdays, and let us know that you are interested by signing up in the Narthex. Workbooks will be available soon through Conundrum Book Store here in St. Francisville. If you have any questions, please contact Olivia Pass: oliviapass@bellsouth.net.

Many thanks for our new volunteers at the Food Pantry, but we still need more. Please contact Kelly Ward at 721-2253 if you would like to help on special occasions.

West Feliciana Food Pantry: For the month of August we are collecting peanut butter and granola bars for our Food Pantry. Drop off your donations in the green wagon in the narthex of the church or the orange barrel outside the church office.

Vacation Bible School was a Great Success: We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Christie Reinhardt, Fr. Peter, and the many volunteers who assisted them with Vacation Bible School this year. Even though it was hot and dry, we had a record number of kids who truly loved the program, the music, the games, and all the arts and crafts. We could not have done it without you all! Thank you very much for your generosity of time and spirit. Blessings, Fr. Roldan+

Babysitters: We lost over four babysitters this summer because they have graduated high school and are off to college. They did an excellent job for us, were very loyal and dependable. We need to replace them with 12 year olds and up. Call the office for more details.

Grace Church
of West Feliciana Parish
P.O. Box 28
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Sunday Ministry Assistants & Calendar

Sunday, July 24, 2016

Acolytes: Mary Elizabeth Barrow, Mathilde Fox-Smith, Charles Stewart Fox-Smith
Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Dalton Clevenger
10:00am: Drew Nordgren, George Newton
Ushers: Dwight Singer, Robert Singer
Lectors: David Opperman, Justin Peno
Vestry Rep: Christian DeJean
Altar Guild Team 1
Altar flowers: Molly McGraw
Sanctuary Candle: Tapper & Betty Sessions
Coffee Hour: Debbie Thomas
Babysitters: Claudia Tully, Mary Willis

Sunday, July 31, 2016

Acolytes: Fiona Tully, James Kirschling, Wyatt Olsen, Logan Reinhardt
Chalice bearers: 7:30am: Sharon Gauthier
10am: Brandie Olsen, Sheryl Wynters
Ushers: Glenn Thomas, Kelly Ward
Lectors: Sarah Rhody, Glenn Thomas
Vestry Rep: Dare Didier
Altar Guild Team 2
Altar flowers: Ronnie and Pat Martin
Sanctuary Candle: Tom and Jeanne Morris
Coffee Hour: Molly McGraw/Mary Thompson
Babysitters: Emma Olsen, Shelby Griffin

July 24, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
8:45-9:45 - Bible Study
10:00am - Eucharist
Coffee Hour
4-6pm Youth Group

July 31, 2016

7:30am - Eucharist
8:45-9:45 - Bible Study
10:00am - Youth led
Eucharist
Coffee Hour
**Returning from
New Orleans trip**

Wednesday, July 27

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist

Thursday, July 28

10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

Friday, July 29

7:00am - Eucharist
8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study

Sunday, July 31

7:30am - Eucharist
8:45-9:45 - Bible Study
10:00am - Eucharist

Wednesday, August 3

5:15pm - Holy Eucharist

Thursday, August 4

9:15am - Morning Prayer
10:00am - Worship at SF Country Manor

Friday, August 5

7:00am - Eucharist
8:30am - Lectionary Bible Study