

EMAIL FROM FR. PEPE (MARCH 2004—BEFORE OUR RETREAT)

Dear Saint Therese Community:

May the peace and love of God be with all of you.

With the departure of Amando to God's house and the responsibilities of my work, I haven't been able to open my email until now. I'll comment a little bit--a few words for your retreat.

There's no doubt that the People of God, especially suffering "Christs", those that society and family has put to the side, or that we put to one side, are those that show us how to walk the ways of the Lord, those who show us how to be pilgrims.

On the feast celebration.

A few days ago we were sharing with our Tselal brothers and sisters in the feast of the "Carnival" that in reality is the foundation of the town of Bachajon. About a month ago we could share with the "captains" (those in charge of the celebration) in their fast for three days while they prayed for their people, isolated. During the fast, they eat only a little and they invite people to come by their houses to eat and drink a little atole (corn milk). They are the servants of the saint. In the feast celebration, the saint comes out to brighten the best of the community: they pray for one another, they share their time and what they have; they dance, talk and get together.

The Mother Earth.

The Mother Earth has given her gifts to all of her children so that they may eat and share in their daily life and especially in the fiesta. She is alive, and for this reason the people speak to her, mention her, and respect her. She is a living being created by God; She is what we all see, feel and also, what we don't see, hear and feel. All of this is made by God. The Tselales respect the Mother Earth and they ask her permission to "injure her" when they plant their seeds which will make food for their sons and daughters. It is a tradition among the grandfathers and grandmothers to throw a party in the cornfield, and give to Mother Earth something they have prepared to eat and drink as a sign that they are returning a little of the abundance that the earth has given us, so that in the Earth's generosity, she continues feeding us from the fertility of her womb.

And the preferred fruit of her womb is the cornfield, the stalks of corn, it is the same corn of the cross that feeds us with its grains and for this reason we are the people of corn. With the Mother Earth, one doesn't play with her, one respects her. One doesn't damage her at all, one cares for her so that she continues feeding us...she is a living being that feels us, cares for us; she is a

creature of God. Within the Earth exists the protector of the same Earth that watches over so that she continues feeding her sons and daughter.

So this, although it isn't much, is what occurred to me to share with you, what has been my experience in the midst of our Tselal people.

Thanks for your presence in the departure of Fr. Amando; he is the seed that knew to die in order to give much fruit.

We await you...The pilgrim follows his/her teacher in the same footsteps that the people have made in their long journey. Let's follow their way.

A hug with much love,

Pepe Aviles A., sj

PS We will have a General Assembly on March 4 and 5 and will keep you very present in our prayers.

PPS Here some of the principales (elders) and a group of older musicians who accompany the traditional feast celebrations of the grandfathers and grandmothers, asked me for a violin...would there be someone there who would have one that they don't use that is in good condition and they would want to donate...it would be most welcome and most appreciated...because their violin broke. The violin would go to good hands.

Querida Jeannie y comunidad de Santa Teresita.

Que la paz y el amor de Dios este con ustedes.

Con la partida de Amando a la casa del Señor y las cargas de trabajo, Hasta ahora tuve un tiempo para abrir mis correos y les comento un poco, tan solo unas palabra para su retiro...

No cabe duda que el Pueblo de Dios, especialmente los cristos sufrientes, los que la sociedad y lo familia hacen a un lado, o hacemos a un lado son quienes nos enseñan a andar los caminos del Señor, quienes nos enseñan a ser caminantes.

Sobre la fiesta.

Hace unos dias estuvimos compartiendo con nuestros hermanos tselales en la fiesta de "Carnaval" que en realidad celebra la fundación del Pueblo de Bachajón. Pudimos compartir desde un mes antes con los capitantes (quienes cargan con la fiesta) que ayuanan durante 3 días haciendo oración por su pueblo, aislados. comen tan sólo un poco e invitan al pueblo a pasar a su casa a comer y beber un poco de atole. Son los servidores del santo. En la fiesta sale a relucir lo mejor de la comunidad: oran unos por otros, comparten su tiempo y lo que tiene, bailan, platican, se reunen. En fin.

La madre tierra.

La madre tierra ha dado sus dones para que sus hijos se alimenten y lo compartan, en el diario vivir y especialmente en la fiesta. Ella está viva, por eso se le habla, se le menciona, se le respeta; es un ser vivo creado por Dios como todo lo que vemos, sentimos y también lo que no vemos, oímos y sentimos; todo es hecho por Dios. A la madre tierra se le respeta se le pide permiso para "herirla" e introducir en ella la semilla que habrá de alimentar a sus hijos e hijas. Es tradición de los abuelos y abuelas hacer fiesta en la milpa, darle de comer y de beber alimentos preparados como un signo que representa un devolverle un poco de lo mucho que nos ha dado, para que en su generosidad nos siga alimentando desde la fecundidad de su vientre. Y su fruto predilecto es la milpá, los tallos del maíz, es la misma milpa la cruz que nos alimenta con sus granos por eso somos los hombres de maíz. Con la madre tierra no se juega, se le respeta, no se le hace ningún daño, se le cuida para que nos siga alimentando... es un ser vivo que nos siente, nos cuida, es creatura de Dios.

Existe dentro de la tierra el prodector de la misma que vela para que ella siga alimentando a sus hijos e hijas.

Pues esto, aunque poquito se me ocurre compartirles de lo que a mi me a tocado vivir en medo de eswte nuestro pueblo tseltal.

Gracias por su presencia en la partida de Amando, el es semilla que supo morir para dar mucho frtuo.

Les esperamos.. El peregrino sige a su maestro en las misma huellas que su pueblo a formado en su largo caminar, sigamoslo.

Un abrazo con mucho cariño

Pepe Avilés A.

p.d. Tendrémos Asamblea General los días 4 y 5 de marzo les tendremos muy presentes.

p.d. Por acá unos principales y un grupo de musiqueros de edad avanzada que acompañan las fiestas tradicionales de los abuelos y abuelas, me pidieron un violín... no habrá por ahí alguien que tenga alguno que ya no use que este en buenas condiciones y quiera donarlo... será bien venido, se los agradecerá mucho.. ya que el suyo de plano se le tronó. Quedará en buenas manos