

Hearts Encountering Hearts

by Karina Velez Juarez

MY VISIT TO INDIGENOUS communities in Chiapas was an experience that helped open my eyes to see beyond the everyday, beyond the conventional. It was a true encounter of the heart with the reality of the poor, with my self, and also with God; an encounter that allowed me to see the marginalization of the poor that contrasts with the dignity of the indigenous community's work, daily chores, and life together. It was an encounter with my self because in the mountains of Chiapas, in a poor wood house without light and with a dirt floor, I found the way that I will go—the continuous struggle with love.



This was an experience of new life with God, because it was there that I found real Christian community, with brothers and sisters living in equality and with peace and tenacity. I rediscovered God in a new way, as a loving God giving dignity to all.

The visit to Chiapas was an invaluable experience that I will never be able to forget. The sincere smiles, the hard-working hands, and of course the exquisite coffee that went with the tortillas and salt we ate everyday, were offered to me with all their heart. I will never forget the light from their hearts that illumines the dark nights in Nuevo Ybeljoj.

It was the words of the former archbishop of Chiapas, Samuel Ruiz, who sums up my experience: “I came to evangelize in Chiapas, but in the end it was I who was evangelized.”