

Thirty Years of Revolution: **Immense Happiness, Immense Commitment**

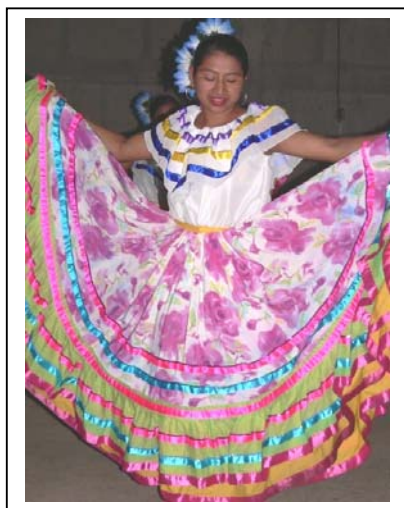
[This statement was released in Managua by the Christian Base Communities of Nicaragua and sent to the Nicaragua Network on July 13 by Father Arnaldo Zenteno. Translation is by Katherine Hoyt.]

*No one can say I won't get involved, I won't commit myself,
Because one would be a bad Christian and a bad citizen.*

Archbishop Oscar Romero

On Celebrating These Thirty Years, We Continue to Strengthen the Values of the Revolution

We celebrate these thirty years with emotion and strength based on the experiences we have lived intensely for and in union with our people. Who among us can remain cold or indifferent especially remembering the courage of our youth confronting the ten year war imposed by the United States government which cost more than 70,000 dead and the destruction of our economy? Who among us does not admire the strength and capacity of our people to support sixteen years of neo-liberal governments which brought benefits to the powerful and worked against the most fundamental rights of our people?



To celebrate with immense happiness these thirty years is not to celebrate just one day, the 19th of July, as the day of the triumph of the revolution. It is also to celebrate the struggle to overthrow the dictator; it is to celebrate so many months, so many days, so many hours intensely lived with their successes, their achievements, their failures and difficulties; so much blood and so many lives given on the battlefield and in the struggle of each day.

When we celebrate these thirty years we want to recognize the presence of God the Liberator who has been manifested to us since the Exodus. But also, distancing ourselves from false triumphalism, we want to recognize and ask forgiveness for errors made and for detours from the right path.

To celebrate these thirty years is also to look forward with realism, thinking of the enormous tasks remaining, the present difficulties and those that will come, to take on the commitment implied in continuing to fight to achieve the dreams that feed and sustain the spirit of our beloved Revolution. It means to allow ourselves to live positively and throw ourselves forward with renewed energy, with greater strength and with firm hope.

As Christians, as base communities, we cannot let this thirtieth anniversary pass without giving thanks to God for having allowed us to participate in this

long process lived by our people in the cause of justice. This cause is a concrete realization of the preferential option for the poor. From among our intensely lived experiences we want to especially remember the Prophetic Insurrection with its fasts and its 315 kilometer stations of the cross for peace and life and against U.S. government terrorism [in July of 1985]. We also want to remember the growth, in neo-liberal times, of our Social Projects for Life, which have been both service and a prophetic voice. And with humility and simplicity we want to recognize our faults, especially when they have weakened our commitment or our prophetic voice.

In the past, we confronted war and neo-liberalism. Today we celebrate the thirty years in a different context; now there is a government with revolutionary principles and with achievements that favor our people such as the Zero Hunger Program, the Zero Usury Program and the removal of fees in hospitals and public schools.

The situation continues to be very difficult and presents us with many challenges. For that reason our celebration of the thirtieth anniversary cannot be merely a triumphalist celebration. It is not enough to say that we have survived and overcome the enormous difficulties and aggressions of these thirty years. This is true, but we also have to know how to fight against the passivity and indifference brought by these last 18 years of so much political infighting. We have to fight against the discouragement and hopelessness that are products of so many years of poverty and hunger. And we have to do this with full consciousness that the road to overcoming poverty is very long and full of difficulties, not caused only by the IMF or the suspension of the Millennium Challenge funds, but also from our own internal failures.

As Christians celebrating these thirty years in the present situation, beseeched by the Gospels and by our people, we have to advance further in our commitment.

In the first place we want, together with others, to revitalize or in certain cases, rescue the authentic values of the Revolution such as justice, generosity to the point of giving one's life, honesty, solidarity with the poorest and most excluded, and solidarity with sister peoples who suffer violence. Now with all our energy we denounce the coup d'état

that our sisters and brothers in Honduras suffered at the hands of an army trained and supported by the administrations of Reagan and Bush.

And secondly, with wisdom and joy we want to recognize and contribute actively to advance the successes and achievements of the government and different organizations of our society that are supporting justice. But also with wisdom and humility we must indicate errors and failures with a sincere prophetic voice. At the same time we must exercise the same self criticism with ourselves.

In the third place, our concrete commitment in the tasks of each day in our neighborhood, at our work and at school, and our participation as citizens, will be clear signals that our commitment to the cause of the poor and the cause of justice is authentic and not mere words.

We give thanks to God that on this path God has inspired us and continues to illuminate and strengthen us especially by the Exodus-Passover through our concrete history and by God's desire that our society be a reality of the dream of Jesus of the Kingdom of God: the Good News for the poor and liberation for the oppressed (Luke 4). And we continue to proclaim that between Christianity and revolution there is no contradiction when both are lived, as we live them, authentically.

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