

Shopping for the Diocesan Art Show and Market Place

By Thille Newton

Rosine Carter of Church of the Annunciation in Luling and I set out on Thursday, September 24 on Mexicana Airlines for Oaxaca, Mexico to purchase handicrafts to be used to sell at the Diocese Arts Fair in October. We were met at the Oaxaca airport by Anne Hill Mayagoitia. Anne has lived in Mexico for 50 years, but originally lived in San Antonio, attended Alamo Heights and St. Mark's Episcopal Church. She installed us at the top half of the duplex rented by the Church of the Holy Trinity. The bottom half is used for church services.

The next morning we were off to visit the markets of Oaxaca and walk we did from one end of the city to the other. We purchased pottery items, textiles, Oaxaca tin, and I even acquired a painted wooden chair for my youngest Houston grandson.

Somewhere along the way, Rosine and I resolved never to eat in the same restaurant twice. We had charming breakfasts in the courtyards of small hotels nearby. These are built in the Spanish style with rooms around a patio and the dining room in the courtyard. Dinner was usually on the main square, seated at tables under the arcades, listening to the band and fireworks, while watching the peddlers, young sweethearts and processions of late night Oaxacans.

Saturday we hired a taxi and headed out of town to some of the small villages known for handmade crafts. In Ocotlán we visited the three workshops of the Aguilar sisters, known far and wide for their pottery figures, both large and small. We were intrigued by the wooden work of Jacobo Angeles, who designs wooden objects painted bright colors, using Zapotec Indians symbols. In Coyotepec we found plenty of Oaxaca black pottery, though sadly we had to leave behind the charming large pieces.

We were privileged to attend Sunday morning services at the Church of the Holy Trinity with the five local, English speaking parishioners. They do not have a priest, so bring in consecrated wafers and conduct their own service. Anne Mayagoitia then took Rosine and me to the famous ruins of Monte Alban, located on the edge of town on a hill that the Zapotecs actually flattened to accommodate the buildings. Later, chatting and sampling different types of mole, Rosine, Anne and I discovered that we are all three army brats.

The next day, after Rosine and I had a blessing of our 4 enormous suitcases filled with handicrafts, we set off for San Antonio with all our wares, which did safely arrive intact and ready for the Diocese Fair.