

A BLESSED HOLIDAY SEASON

We pray that all of you have had a blessed Christmas and New Years celebration. This year we have enjoyed the visit of our daughter Elizabeth and her husband Matt from Minneapolis. Elizabeth is hoping to finish her PhD in Statistics Education at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in 2016. She was recently hired to teach full time at the University, which includes working in their online education program. Matt works as a mechanical engineer at a company that builds laser work stations.



In August, our younger daughter Monica finished a Masters Degree in Sociology at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. She loves living in Amsterdam and was fortunate to find work there at an NGO. She has become fluent in Dutch and is hoping to be able to continue living and working in Amsterdam.



During this past year, Alicia has retired from teaching and has been helping to care for her mother, who turned 100 years old in June. That has been a difficult challenge for her. David has continued teaching at the Theological Community of Mexico and the Lutheran Seminary here in Mexico City, where he also coordinates the online course program. Unfortunately, he has been experiencing some health problems and was in the hospital in August after being diagnosed with celiac disease. He is still not feeling 100%, but his doctors are confident that he will get there soon. We appreciate very much your ongoing support and prayers!

THREE KINGS DAY IN MEXICO

Although Santa Claus and the giving of gifts for Christmas have become increasingly popular in Mexico over the last few decades, traditionally the day in which children receive gifts is January 6, when Christians commemorate the visit of the magi in Bethlehem (Epiphany). In Mexico, it is commonly referred to as "El Dia de los Santos Reyes," or Three Kings Day. In the preceding days, many parents take their children to visit persons dressed up as the three kings to tell the kings what presents they would like to receive and to get their picture taken. The children also write their petitions on little pieces of paper, tie them to balloons filled with helium, and let the balloons ascend into the sky, where the three kings receive them.



On the eve of January 6, the children leave their shoes out for the three kings, Melchior, Gaspar, and Balthasar. During the night, the three kings visit each home, leaving gifts and filling the shoes with candy and other small goodies. There is also a large, oval-shaped sweet bread that is eaten on January 6 throughout Mexico, called the "Rosca de Reyes."



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