

MEET MY STUDENT REV. ABEL LOPEZ

During the intensive course on Biblical Interpretation that I gave this year in January, I got to meet Pastor Abel Lopez, who is studying the Masters Degree in Biblical Studies at the Theological Community of Mexico. Since then, I have also been working with Abel as he works on his thesis.



Abel is a pastor in a small town in the state of Guerrero in southern Mexico named San Juan Totolcintla. The congregation he serves, First Apostolic Church, was founded in 1996 and has over 250 members. Abel, who is from the Mexico City area, has been at the congregation since 2008.

The inhabitants of San Juan Totolcintla speak Náhuatl as a first language and Spanish as a second language. About 90% of Abel's congregation are unable to read and write. The men of the community are gone six months out of every year doing agricultural work elsewhere.



In addition to his pastoral and evangelistic work, Abel oversees the leadership training school at the congregation as well as 13 different cell groups. Members of the congregation, including Abel's wife Isabela, are also involved in educational work in the community at large. This includes working with the government to teach people how to read and write and enable many of them to finish their primary and secondary school education.

MAY 3, DAY OF THE CONSTRUCTION WORKER IN MEXICO

In Mexico, May 3 is both the Day of Construction Workers as well as the Day of the Holy Cross. On the eve of May 3, construction workers build a cross out of discarded construction materials and adorn the cross with flowers, candles, and different colors of paper. Then, on May 3, they place the cross at the highest point of the construction they are working on.



At midday, after having worked several hours, the construction workers celebrate their day with a festive meal at the construction site. The person who pays for the meal and presides over it is the owner of the building being built or the person in charge of its construction. The menu is composed of traditional Mexican dishes. Architects, building engineers, and others involved in construction, as well as the workers' families, also participate in the celebration.



This tradition dates back to colonial days, when it was introduced by Spanish missionaries, who every May 3 had a decorated cross placed at the pinnacle of the churches throughout Mexico.

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