

# Celebre El Día de Los Muertos

By John Rosales

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Saints Days merged with Aztec harvest rites.

As such, the Days of the Dead begin on Oct. 27 when the spirits of those with no survivors are received by kind-hearted families with bread

and jugs of water. The offerings are meager, but at least the orphaned souls find something.

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house, performing comic skits in exchange for treats. They represent mischievous ghosts who have not yet come home.

Or they assume the role of Death or the Devil, coming to deprive spirits from living again. They too can be bribed away with a treat.

By midday on Nov. 1 (All Saints Day), child spirits must be gone. Bells ring through the afternoon as the adults (called the faithful dead) begin to arrive. While the spirits of children are hosted only at home, adults can also be greeted at their graves. Families formally host the adult who died most recently, and through him or her other ancestors are acknowledged. In some villages, people visit the homes of families who have lost a relative within the past year.

At sundown, families move to the graveyard for an all-night vigil of communion with the dead. Tombs and gravestones have been scrubbed clean and painted. Candles are lit throughout the cemetery -- one for each lost soul. People will pray, talk, eat and drink until sunrise. Some bring radios and TVs to pass the time. A priest might celebrate a Mass in the cemetery. In most cities, food stands are set up outside the grounds. At sunrise, people start to depart.

On Nov. 2 (All Souls Day), visitors continue to crowd the cemetery. Strolling musicians play favorite songs of the departed. By evening, the party is over. The ghosts return to the world of the dead. Only a few are reluctant to leave. These stubborn souls must be scared away by villagers wearing skull masks.

In the United States, the family altar is the most visible symbol of the Days of the Dead ritual. Sometimes during October, an altar is set up on a table with baby's breath flowers, fruit and drink. Each soul being honored is represented on the altar by a candle. A photograph of the deceased may be placed there along with the right brand of cigarette or symbols of other earthly pleasures. For the spirits of children, a favorite toy might be set out.

A path of marigold petals -- with their powerful scent -- is set out from the altar to the front door to help spirits find their home.

While those of us on earth are escaping into the world of the dead, those who are dead are taking much pleasure among the living. Ironic, isn't it?



Calacas made by Don Pedro Linares and his sons.



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**Celebre El Dia de los Muertos  
Sabado Dia 1 de Noviembre  
La Fiesta Restaurant  
1519 34th St. - 7:00 p.m.  
In a Dinner Theatre Atmosphere  
Come Out Support the Event!**

"El Respeto  
al Derecho  
Ajeno es La  
Paz."

"Respect for  
the Rights of  
Others Is  
Peace"  
Lic. Benito  
Juarez

Vol. XXI No. 5

# EL EDITOR

Week of October 30 to November 5, 1997

Lubbock, Texas

Established 1977 - Texas' Oldest Hispanic Owned Newspapers

## EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS Y UNA LECCION DE VIDA Y MUERTE

By Victor Landa

The person who told me this long ago says he doesn't remember where he read it or heard it. Placing it in space and time somehow doesn't seem important. What matters is that it resonates in life the way a stone in a pond rings true in concentric circles.

"In our tradition," he said, "people die three deaths." The first death, he recounted, is when our bodies cease to function; when our hearts no longer beat of their own accord, when our gaze no longer has depth or weight, when the space we occupy slowly loses its meaning.

The second death comes when the body is lowered into the ground, returned to mother earth, out of sight.

The third death, the most definitive death, is when there is no one left alive to remember us.

To the casual observer, *el dia de los muertos*, the Day of the Dead, is at best a quaint tradition of the Mexican people, with delicious sugar skulls and cemeteries littered with bright, beautiful flowers. At worst, it is pagan superstition, a remnant of ancient cults and days long past.

To the casual observer, death is the end game. But like the stone that causes ripples on the surface of the water and then sinks to become part of the pond, so death is as much a part of life as memory is to the living.

On Nov. 1, some of us will gather in the *campo santos*, the holy fields, to scrub down the tombstones, tidy the grass, decorate with flowers and sit and remember. Others will build altars to the memory of those passed; a picture, a favorite dish, a drink, a toy, a cigar. Stories will be told, evoking the memory of the *tio*, of the *abuelo*, of the son dead in the war. And with the stories our dead return to laugh with us, and cry with us, and dance with us. They spring forth from our memory, our sacred obligation to keep them alive, our sacred obligation to keep ourselves alive, because to live is to build memories, to remember and to be remembered.

Unlike Halloween, where death wears a mask and is lived in the grotesque, the tradition of *el dia de los muertos* does not see death as a monster. Death is not something you run from with plastic surgery, daily workouts and fad diets. Neither is death something taken lightly or ignored out of a fear of confronting oneself. *La muerte* is music and fireworks, food and flowers. The only way to celebrate death is to live with courage, just as the only way to cause ripples upon the soft water is to pierce it with a hard stone.

*El dia de los muertos* is a celebration of life. To know this is to contemplate another reality where we live to be well remembered, where we act to be well-evoked, where we love to be well-missed. In this sense each moment contains forever and each memory is constantly beginning.

And so we sweep the tombs of our dead and build altars to our loved ones because memories need a sacrament in which to be rooted; a simple act of caring, a noble act of life.

To the casual observer *el dia de los muertos* is almost surreal, because the casual observer is merely interested in spectacle (just as he or she understands death as happening only once). And this very well may be the point where cultural values diverge. Where one who throws a stone to the water is satisfied with the splash, the other will sit and consider the ripples.

(Victor Landa is news director of the Telemundo affiliate KVDA-TV in San Antonio.)

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## Raul Orduña Se Presenta En Celebración



by Bidal Aguero

Mas del tiempo cuando la gente del oeste de Texas oye que un grupo musica se com-

pone de violines y guitarras, piensan que se habla de un mariachi. Nomas una cosa falta las trompetas. Ademas

## Indo-Hispanic Celebration Day of the Dead

By John Rosales

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**LOOK FOR  
COMMENTARIOS  
ON PAGE 2**

**Comentarios de Bidal Aguero****A Short Lubbock Halloween Story**

About the only thing I ever do to observe Halloween every year is to take Marisol to a carnival or around the neighborhood to 'Trick or Treat'. After she goes to sleep sometimes we go to LULAC's annual costume party to vote for the Bato Gacho - which usually means Lugo or Chevo.

Our newspaper tries to concentrate on the celebration of "El Dia de Los Muertos" by providing information about the centuries old celebration. This year the paper has strived to do the same.

I will probably do the same this year with Marisol as in the past and I will also try and attend the LULAC party. On Saturday I hope that many of our readers will try to attend Lubbock Centro Aztlán's celebration of "El Dia de los Muertos". We guaranteed that the presentation will prove to be both entertaining and educational.

This year for a change I thought I would write a short Halloween story, as best I could, to also try and entertain as well as educate.

The story starts like any other with a hero, a villian, someone in trouble the cast could be endless, but lets just stick to these three. Now they have to be described and how they play a part in this story.

First the person in trouble. To make it simple and

avoid having to deal with gender or having to say he/she everytime, let's just call her "La gente".

La gente is in a perdition. She lives in a world where it seems everything goes against her and everything seems to favor the villain. More about him, "El Jefe," later. La gente's family is always having problems. One of her kids is having trouble in school and gets involved with gangs. One of her young girls already has two children of her own and doesn't have a job. One of her kids is always sick with asthma. Her husband works at two jobs, both for minimum wage without any type of benefits.

Seems like quite a horror story already huh? I didn't mean this short story to be so long. There's not much left.

The villian, I already told you his name is "El Jefe" always acts as if he wants to help La gente. He knows of all her problems and tries to come up with what he calls "programs" in order to solve all her problems. For instance - he tells her that he's going to build a big building to give her son and his friends that are always in trouble a place to stay so they can stay out of trouble. Of course La gente is going to have a chip in money in order to build this building. This means more

money out of her husband's wages. To her young girl and her kids problems, he has a program that has been going on for a long time. But El Jefe is saying that he is going to take her daughter's money away now because she didn't respond to a letter he sent her asking her to get a job. He knows the daughter doesn't have an education or any type of work skills. Even if La Gente's daughter is taken off the program, La Gente will continue to have to pay for it through what El Jefe calls "taxes". She has to pay these everytime she goes to the store which can total out to be many times a month given the amount of people in La gente's family. Concerning her little girl's health problems. El Jefe says he is working on it but says that finding a solution is going to take some time because El Jefe's friends who live at the State and U.S. capital keep fighting about such things as where the leader is getting his money, whether he messed around many years ago with a woman and many other things that really don't have anything to do with La gente. To her husband's problem of having to hold down the jobs. El Jefe does say that he is working on a big program to bring in more jobs. El Jefe doesn't even say what kind of jobs. He does say that La gente's taxes that are paid at

the store every week will have to go up so the money raised can go toward paying these people that are supposed to bring in jobs to come to town. Kind of complicated, huh?

Well we finally get to the hero. Or maybe we should say heroes. Heroes are people that always try to help La gente. Of course they don't have any money, or at least not enough to go against the big bucks that El Jefe has to spend. The heroes always seem to get shot down or discredited by friends of El Jefe who control most all the communication methods because of El Jefe's and friends money. Some of La gente's relatives are even starting to think that the Heroes are no good or evil. El Jefe sometimes tries to get some of his friends to join the Heroes and make La Gente think that the new Heroes are the answer.

All in all this little horror story is really not little because it goes on and on. La gente always seems to get the bad end of it, El Jefe always winds up with the best and the heroes keep trying.

Quite a horror story, huh?

by Bidal Aguero

P.S. Some Heroes and member of La gente are thinking about working together to really work on the problems. Perhaps it's time for Super-Hero to come in the story.

**La Leyenda De La Llorona**

by Alberto Peña

Recuerdo que mi mama me decía, "No te portes male, oh te lleva La Llorona". Entonces empezaban los cuentos. Todos tenían algo que contar de sus encuentros con ese espanto perdido. En la luz que nos daba la lumbre, cada uno explicaba del grito amarguro de esa "Mal Arrepentida." Un grito tan doloroso que helaba los huesos, y daba frío hasta el mas profundo de el corazón, hasta aserlo parar de palpitá. Un lamento terrible que totalmente atemorizaba a todos, hombres y niños igual.

Una tarde oí el grito cuando andaba caminando por la orilla del río. Mi mama me dijo que era el fantasma de La Llorona, que se aparecía por esas partes. Una mujer condenada a buscaba por los ríos del mundo las almas de sus dos niños que ella mato.

Dicen que La Llorona se lleva a cualquier niño que se

mato. Segun la leyenda ella derribó los niños en las aguas torrentes del río porque su novio, el padre de los niños, la dejó por otra mujer y no quiso casarse con ella. Entonces ella en su enojo mato los niños. Despues, al reconocer el mal que había echo se tiro así mismo en el río y tambien se hogo en las aguas torrentes. Al llegar al pasado a la eternidad un guardiante le pregunto. "¿Dónde estan tus niños?" Ella trató de salvarse de la sentencia del tormento eterno, que merecía por el dano que causo a los dos inocentes, y dijo que no sabia. Pero en el camino soletano no se puede mentir, ayí todo es descubierto. Entonces ella fue condenada a buscaba por los ríos del mundo las almas de sus dos niños que ella mato.

De mi juventud recuerdo de mi trabajo en las labores del campo. Recuerdo que asía todo para acabar mi trabajo antes de oscurecer, porque no quería andar para mi casa en el oscuro. La noche era llena de ruidos y sombras. Y entre las sombras camina La Llorona. Era bueno aprisarnos a

llegar a casa o avia peligro de ser llevado por esa espanta. Mis compañeros, llenos de miedo se imaginaban verla y gritaban, "La Llorona!" Ese grito nos cuajaba la sangre. Todos corrían sin parar hasta la casa. Llegaban totalmente atemorizados.

En mi juventud me encontre con La Llorona, ayí en la orilla del río mas de una vez. Esa perdida nos seguía. Quería llevarnos. Cuando la vianos caminando por las sombras y oyianos ese grito lamentoso no nos quedaba duda de su realidad.

Esta historia no tiene fin. Siglo tras siglo La Llorona a buscado sus hijos muertos. Jamás los a podido encontrar. Siguera buscando por los ríos del mundo, porque así es su sentencia. Ella es condenada a viejar por el mundo en busca de sus hijos muertos.

**El 'Portero' Del Servicio de Inmigracion Ha Abierto Otras Puertas Mortiferas**

Por Claudia E. Smith

Este otoño marca el tercer aniversario de la Operación Portero, la pieza principal de la gestión de gobierno de Clinton para combatir la inmigración ilegal hacia California. Pero con todo el alboroto sobre el supuesto éxito de la operación, no se ha dicho mucho sobre su lado obscuro: La táctica de empujar a los migrantes hacia el este, que se ha tornado cada vez más mortífera.

Hasta ahora en este año, el conteo oficial de cadáveres asciende a 75 -- y los propios agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza se preguntan cuántos migrantes mueren sin que se les cuente. Por lo menos 36 personas murieron de exposición a la intemperie en las montañas de Tecate y el Desierto Imperial; otras 20 se ahogaron en el All American Canal que separa a Calexico de Mexicali. A muchos otros se les ha encontrado al borde de la muerte.

El objetivo de la Operación Portero era desarticular los patrones tradicionales del cruce de la frontera entre el océano y la Mesa Otay de San Diego; mudar el tránsito hacia algunas de las zonas más peligrosas del suroeste.

Al principio, sus planificadores apostaron a que las montañas con picos de hasta 5,000 pies de altura ayudarían a detener a los migrantes. El director regional occidental del INS, Gustavo de la Viña, explicó: "La idea era que el terreno era tan difícil que los migrantes no se atrevían a cruzarlo."

Pero eso no sucedió. Diecisésis hombres y mujeres murieron congelados en enero último tratando de pasar por encima de esas montañas. "Eso nos estremeció," dice de la Viña.

No lo suficiente, evidentemente.

A continuación, los planificadores apostaron sobre el desierto, en el que las temperaturas pueden alcanzar más de 120 grados Fahrenheit durante días interminables. Durante el mes de agosto solamente, 13 migrantes murieron de exposición prolongada al calor.

Frente a este costo en vidas humanas, ¿qué ha logrado la Operación Portero aparte de mover fuera de la vista del público a los que atravesian ilegalmente la frontera?

Aunque la nueva estrategia disuada a algunos migrantes, la mayoría no ve más alternativa que correr riesgos

enormes. Cantidad sin precedentes vienen atravesando la frontera del desierto con México -- 400 por ciento más que al principio de la Operación Portero.

Los investigadores sitúan las probabilidades de detención en sólo 20 por ciento al 30 por ciento. El reciente Estudio Binacional de la Migración señaló que esa probabilidad puede disminuir significativamente a pesar de la acumulación de agentes y aparatos, si ese aumento en efectivos policiales mueve a una cantidad mayor de los que atraviesan la frontera a utilizar los servicios de expertos contrabandistas. Y, de hecho, la Operación Portero ha resultado en beneficio para los contrabandistas.

La respuesta gastada de la Patrulla Fronteriza a la crítica de una estrategia que pone a los migrantes en el camino del daño mortal es la de culpar a los contrabandistas. Desde luego, los que llevan a los migrantes a recorridos de hasta 60 millas y abandonan al que se quede atrás, deben ser enjuiciados con todo el peso de la ley. Pero los contrabandistas causan de la inmigración ilegal, y medidas energéticas en su contra no van a secar el suministro de guías.

Con relación a ésto, otro indicador importante de que la Operación Portero ha sido inefectiva es la disponibilidad continua de trabajadores para las industrias que dependen en gran medida de los trabajadores indocumentados. Un estudio realizado el año pasado por el Centro para Estudios

Continued on Page 5

**News Briefs****GOP Puts 'Hold' on Medicare Nominee**

A congressional source said today Senate Republicans are stalling action on President Clinton's nominee to run the Medicare program, reports Associated Press.

The effort is being led by Sen. Jon Kyl, R-Ariz., who has placed a "hold" on the nomination of Nancy-Ann Min DeParle, said the source, who spoke on grounds of anonymity.

Kyl's delaying tactic, this source said, is aimed at pressuring Clinton to sign legislation that would allow doctors to sidestep Medicare price restrictions and enter private contracts with wealthy senior citizens. Under that proposal, doctors could charge these patients as much as they were willing to pay.

"They have my phone number. They know what I want," Kyl told The New York Times, which initially reported the story. "Private contracts would give seniors more freedom to choose their doctors, to be treated by physicians of their choice outside the Medicare system," he said.

Melissa Skolfield, a spokeswoman at the Department of Health and Human Services, said Ms. DeParle had become "a pawn in the end-of-the-year politics of Capitol Hill."

Republican Sen. Bill Frist of Tennessee had said during Ms. DeParle's confirmation hearing that she was very well qualified. But the congressional source said today Kyl "has some concerns" about the nominee's positions on some Medicare issues.

Rep. Bill Thomas, a California Republican who chairs the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health, said it was the process that is flawed - not the nominee.

Senators can place a hold on a nomination by registering their objections with the Senate leadership, which normally tries to accommodate them.

Ms. DeParle would succeed Bruce Vladeck as administrator of the Federal Health Care Financing Administration, which spends more than \$300 billion a year on Medicare and Medicaid.

**Houston May Ban Affirmative Action**

Houston's voters will decide Nov. 4 whether to wipe out their affirmative action program, something Californians did last year, reports Associated Press.

If the measure passes, Houston will be the first U.S. city to eliminate affirmative action, and the debate could shift from California to another state with a large minority population: Texas.

Houston's program, which began in 1984, requires businesses that win city contracts to try to give 20 percent of their work to women and minorities.

The measure to end preferences has received a cooler reception than the one in California, which passed 55 percent to 45 percent.

A poll released Oct. 2 by the Houston Chronicle and KHOU-TV said 29 percent of voters want to abolish the program and 56 percent want to keep it or expand it. The rest were undecided.

Four of the five leading candidates in this fall's mayoral race said they would vote against the measure. Those four include the two front-runners, Republican activist Rob Mosbacher Jr. and Lee Brown, who was President Clinton's drug czar and would be Houston's first black mayor.

The measure was put on the ballot by Houston businessman and GOP activist Ed Blum, who last year successfully challenged the creation of several congressional districts that were redrawn to favor minorities.

**HUD Lowers Rent Subsidies**

The government will no longer be paying Newark, N.J., landlords \$1,032 for an apartment that ordinarily would rent for \$784, or Providence, R.I., landlords \$956 for a unit they otherwise could rent for only \$625, reports Associated Press.

President Clinton is signing legislation to lower rent subsidies the Department of Housing and Urban Development pays on 850,000 apartments occupied by low-income tenants across the country.

At the same time, however, the spending bill for veterans, housing and environmental programs will allow many landlords to refinance their mortgages at lower rates to help them weather the drop in rental income.

HUD is counting on savings of \$1.6 billion over five years from reduced rent subsidies.

Under the rental program known as Section 8, tenants pay 30 percent of their income as rent and HUD pays the difference. The program has provided for regular rent increases, an incentive to developers to build low-income housing.

The subsidies have pushed up the rents for many of those apartments up well above market rates.

At the same time, the 20-year contracts that developers had with HUD to build and maintain the subsidized units are expiring.

The bill renews for one year all expiring contracts to provide subsidized housing - about 1.8 million apartments nationwide.

Others say more action will be needed.

Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation spokesman Chris Barnett said Congress should renew the Section 8 contracts for more than one year.

"Many of these renewals are coming up on their 15th, 20th or 25th year anniversary," he said. "They're going to need more investment. Banks aren't going to lend on a one-year income stream."

Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II of Massachusetts, the top Democrat on the Banking Committee's housing subcommittee, said the nation needs more housing for the poor.

"We simply are no longer building affordable housing units," Kennedy said. "We end up cutting housing programs because we say they don't work and then we wonder why we see homeless people on the street. We see homeless people on the street because we don't provide housing."

Cuomo agreed. He said improvements to programs such as Section 8 may help build support for building new affordable housing.

"We have a two-step process," Cuomo said. "Step one: Make HUD work. Step two: Build housing."

**Trick or Treat  
Happy Halloween  
Look out for the Little Ones**

# Fiesta Super Market I.G.A.

1807 PARKWAY

Store Hours:

7:30am - 8:30pm

Utility Bills Taken:

•Energas •SWB •LP&L •SPS •Cox Cable

Services:

- Check Cashing
- Money Orders
- Bus Passes
- Postage Stamps
- Car Tags



## OCTOBER HALLOWEEN "SPECIAL EVENT"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31<sup>ST</sup> HALLOWEEN NIGHT  
FROM 4:00PM 'TIL 6:00PM

LIVE RADIO REMOTE FROM MAGIC 93.7  
HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST!!

WILL BE JUDGED BY T.J. PATTERSON

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE - \$100.<sup>00</sup> GIFT CERTIFICATE

2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE - \$50.<sup>00</sup> GIFT CERTIFICATE

3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE - \$25.<sup>00</sup> GIFT CERTIFICATE

Fresh Pork  
Shoulder Picnics

.79¢ lb.

Great For Tamales

Todo esto es de parte de  
Supermercado Fiesta IGA en el  
Parkway Plaza Shopping Center  
Visite nuestra tienda por  
especiales de Halloween  
\*\*\*\*\*

Traiga a sus niños para que  
reciban regalos de  
Tricks or Treats

THIS IS ALL  
FROM YOUR  
FIESTA IGA  
PARKWAY PLAZA  
SHOPPING  
CENTER.  
CHECK STORE  
FOR INSIDE  
HALLOWEEN  
SPECIALS  
BRING ALL YOUR  
KIDS TO GET  
TRICKS & TREATS



# Los Días De Los Muertos Levantan El Animo

Por John Rosales

Todos necesitamos escapar de nuestras realidades personales de vez en cuando. Eso puede explicar por qué la celebración indohispánica de los Días de los Muertos está aumentando de popularidad en los Estados Unidos.

Los rituales brindan una salida. A medida que reúnen elementos del catolicismo y del ritual azteca, me dan un respiro anual como ningún otro.

Entre el 27 de octubre y el 2 de noviembre de cada año, los vivos invitan a los espíritus de los familiares muertos y a otros a volver a sus casas para comer gallina en mole y pan de muerto, así como a beber una preparación de chocolate con canela y pasta de maíz.

Una parte de la idea es burlarse de la muerte, porque después de todo, no hay forma de escaparse de ella. Cuando viví brevemente en México, tuve el privilegio de adentrarme en el mito y las festividades que rodean a esta antigua ceremonia.

Con la conquista española en 1521, se introdujeron nuevos rituales fúnebres en México. Los ritos funerarios católicos llegaron a existir junto con la noción azteca del más allá. Los santos se unieron a la jerarquía de los dioses aztecas. Los

Días de los Difuntos y de Todos los Santos se fundieron con los rituales aztecas de la cosecha.

Como tales, los Días de los Muertos empiezan el 27 de octubre, cuando los espíritus de aquéllos que no tienen sobrevivientes son recibidos por famili-



as de corazón bondadoso con pan y jarras de agua. Las ofertas son pobres, pero por lo menos las almas huérfanas encuentran algo.

El 28 de octubre, a los que instigaron un accidente, asesinato u otra acción violenta se les ofrecen pan y agua, colocados fuera de las casas o en la esquina de una iglesia, para mantenerlos alejados, porque no han sido perdonados.

Las panaderías y dulcerías venden una gran cantidad de calaveras, cruces y cadáveres comestibles los días 29 y 30 de octubre, en preparación para el día siguiente, la Víspera de Todos los Santos. En este día es cuando los espíritus de los niños muertos regresan a sus casas.

En una variación de Halloween, como se celebra en

(el Día de Todos los Santos), los espíritus de los niños deben haberse ido. Las campanas tañen durante la tarde mientras los adultos (a quienes se llama los fieles difuntos) comienzan a llegar. Mientras que los espíritus de los niños sólo pueden ser recibidos en sus casas, a los adultos se les permite saludar también en sus tumbas.

Las familias reciben formalmente al adulto que murió más reciente-

mente, y mediante él o ella se reconoce a otros antecesores. En algunas aldeas, las personas visitan los hogares de las familias que han perdido a un pariente durante el año anterior.

Al ponerse el sol, las familias van al cementerio para una vigilia de

la fiesta ha terminado. Los espíritus regresan al mundo de los muertos. Sólo unos cuantos muestran renuentes a irse. Estas almas testarudas deben ser esparcidas por los aldeanos que llevan máscaras semejando calaveras.

En los Estados Unidos, el altar de



Para el mediodía del 1x de noviembre

toda la noche, de comunión con los muertos. Las tumbas y las lápidas sepulcrales han sido limpiadas y pintadas. Se encienden velas por todo el cementerio -- una por cada alma perdida. La gente ora, habla, come y bebe hasta el amanecer. Algunos llevan radios y televisores para pasar el

tiempo. Un sacerdote podría celebrar Misa en el cementerio.

En la mayoría de las ciudades, se levantan quioscos de alimentos fuera de los cementerios. Al amanecer, la gente empieza a marcharse.

El 2 de noviembre (Día de los Difuntos), los visitantes siguen congregándose en el cementerio.

Músicos ambulantes tocan las canciones favoritas de los que se han marchado. Para la caída de la tarde,

la familia es el símbolo más visible del ritual de los Días de los Muertos. Algunas veces durante el mes de octubre, se arregla un altar sobre una mesa con flores "baby's breath", frutas y bebidas. A cada alma que está siendo recordada se le representa sobre el altar con una foto del desaparecido allí, junto con la marca adecuada de cigarrillos o símbolos de otros placeres terrenales. Para los espíritus de los niños, se puede colocar un juguete favorito.

Un sendero de pétalos de claveles -- con su poderoso perfume -- se arregla desde el altar hasta la puerta de entrada, para ayudar a los espíritus a encontrar su casa.

Mientras que aquéllos de nosotros que estamos sobre la tierra nos escafamos hacia el mundo de los muertos, aquéllos que ya murieron están recibiendo mucho placer entre los vivos. Es irónico, ¿no es verdad?

(El escritor John Rosales, oriundo de San Antonio, vive en Washington, DC.)

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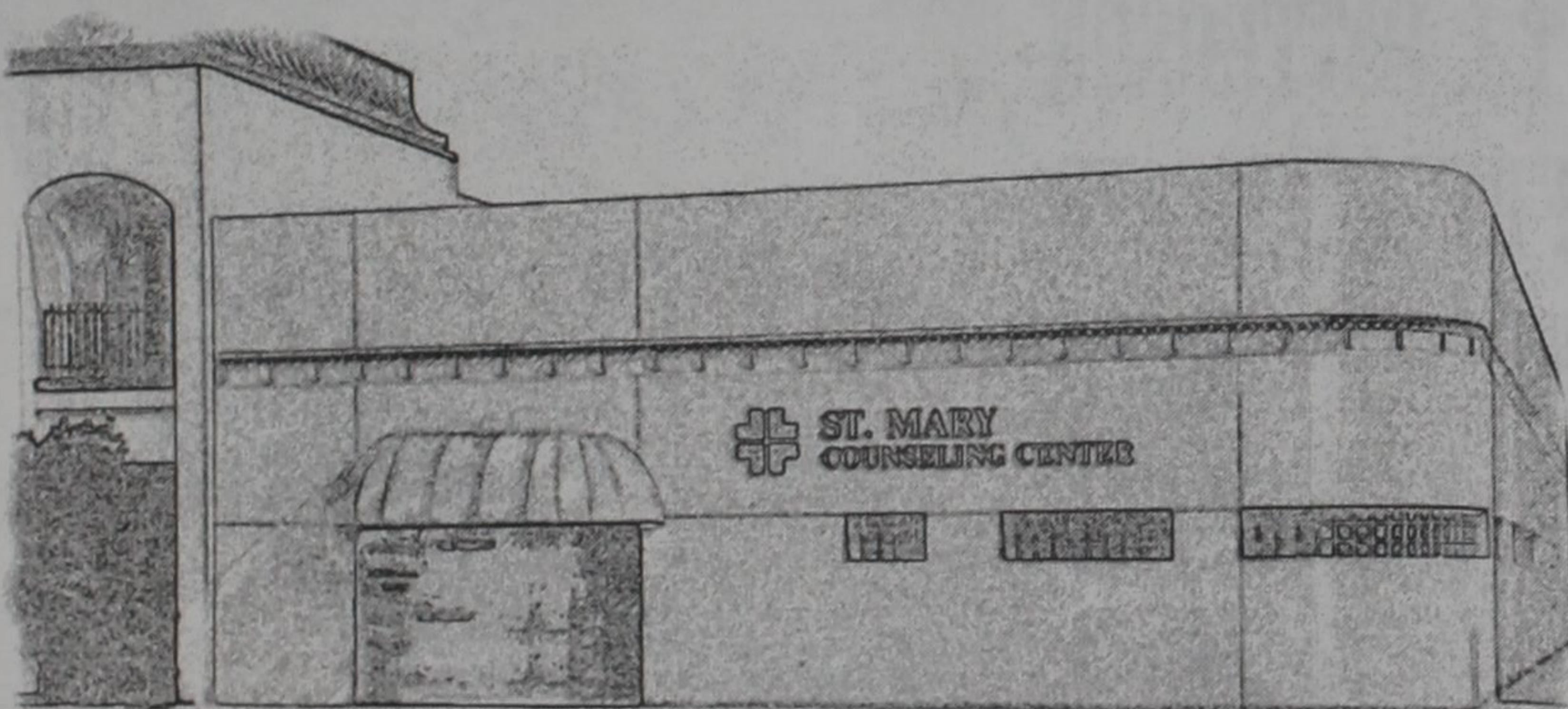


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## EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS Y UNA LECCION DE VIDA Y MUERTE

Por Victor Landa

La persona que me dijo lo siguiente hace mucho tiempo dice que no recuerda dónde lo leyó u oyó. El colocarlo en el espacio y el tiempo de algún modo parece irrelevante. Lo importante es que resuena en la vida así como una piedra suena verdadera en círculos concéntricos en un charco.

"En nuestra tradición," dice él, "las personas mueren tres veces." La primera muerte es cuando nuestros cuerpos dejan de funcionar; cuando nuestros corazones ya no laten por sí mismos, cuando nuestra mirada ya no tiene más profundidad o peso, cuando el espacio que ocupamos pierde lentamente su significado.

La segunda muerte llega cuando el cuerpo es bajado a la tierra, devuelto a la madre tierra, fuera de vista.

La tercera muerte, la más definitiva, es cuando ya no queda nadie vivo para recordarnos.

Para el observador casual, el Día de los Muertos es, cuando más, una tradición curiosa del pueblo mexicano, con carabelas de azúcar deliciosas y cementerios llenos de bellas flores brillantes. Cuando menos, una superstición pagana, un remanente de cultos antiguos y días idos hace mucho tiempo.

Para el observador casual, la muerte es el juego final. Pero como la piedra que produce ondas en la superficie del agua y después se hunde para convertirse en parte del estanque, así la muerte es en gran medida una parte de la vida, como el recuerdo para los vivos.

Hoy, algunos de nosotros nos reuniremos en los camposantos para limpiar las losas fúnebres, arreglar la hierba, adornar con flores y sentarnos a recordar. Otros construirán altares a la memoria de los que se fueron: un retrato, un plato favorito, una bebida, un juguete, un tabaco. Se harán cuentos que evocen el recuerdo del tío, o del abuelo, o del hijo muerto en la guerra. Y con los relatos, los muertos regresarán a reír con nosotros, llorar con nosotros y bailar con nosotros. Ellos surgirán de nuestros recuerdos, nuestra sagrada obligación de mantenerlos vivos, nuestra sagrada obligación de mantenernos vivos a nosotros mismos, porque vivir es edificar recuerdos, recordar y ser recordados.

A diferencia de Halloween, donde la muerte lleva una máscara y se vive en lo grotesco, la tradición del Día de los Muertos no ve la muerte como un monstruo. La muerte no es algo de lo que se huye con cirugía plástica, ejercicios diarios y dietas de moda.

Ni tampoco es la muerte algo que se tome a la ligera o se pase por alto, por temor de enfrentarse a sí mismo. La muerte es música y fuegos artificiales, alientos y flores. El único modo de celebrar la muerte es vivir con valor, al igual que la única forma de crear ondas en el agua tranquila es perfilarla con una piedra dura.

El Día de los Muertos es una celebración de la vida. Saber esto es contemplar otra realidad donde vivimos para ser bien recordados, donde actuamos para ser bien evocados, donde amamos para que se nos eche bien de menos. En este sentido, cada momento contiene el para siempre y cada recuerdo está empezando constantemente.

Y así barremos las tumbas de nuestros muertos y edificaremos altares a nuestros seres queridos, porque los recuerdos necesitan de un sacramento en el cual estar arraigados, una acción sencilla de preocuparse, una acción noble de vida.

Para el observador casual, el Día de los Muertos es algo sobre natural porque el observador casual está interesado solamente en el espectáculo (así como él o ella entiende a la muerte como que ocurre sólo una vez). Y esto puede muy bien ser el punto en que divergen los valores culturales. Donde uno tira una piedra al agua y está satisfecho con la salpicadura, el otro se sentará y reflexionará sobre las ondas.

(Victor Landa es director de información de la KVDA-TV, afiliada de Telemundo en San Antonio.)

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## From Page 2

Estadounidenses y Mexicanos de la Universidad de California en San Diego mostró que más del 90 por ciento de los empleadores de San Diego en las industrias sospechosas no sufrieron escasez en el suministro de trabajadores. En verdad, casi el 25 por ciento informó un aumento en solicitantes de trabajo inmigrantes.

Difícilmente es noticia que los empleos son la atracción.

De modo que, ¿Se está haciendo para enfocarse sobre los patronos que acumulan grandes utilidades al contratar trabajadores indocumentados e infringir muchas leyes en el proceso? En San Diego, de todos los lugares, eso no debería ser difícil. Sin embargo, el Fiscal Federal del Distrito Sur de California, Alan Bersin, que también tiene el papel de zar de la frontera en el gobierno de Clinton, ha pasado por alto en gran medida al imán de la inmigración. Ni un sólo patrono ha sido procesado judicialmente en 1997.

Las cifras nacionales son también bastante lastimeras. De seguro, el poner a los empleadores como blanco del

gobierno es una estrategia más humana (por no mencionar eficaz) de "hacer cumplir el imperio de la ley" en la frontera.

No podemos sellar la frontera -- algo que hasta la Patrulla Fronteriza reconoce. El resultado de la táctica más reciente, la de mudar 130 agentes de la Patrulla Fronteriza hacia el sector de El Centro durante el próximo par de meses, bien puede impulsar a los migrantes más profundamente hacia el interior de la vasta extensión del desierto.

En resumen, mientras la muy cacareada recuperación económica de México continúa soñando a sus pobres y ellos continúen satisfaciendo nuestras necesidades de mano de obra barata y desecharable, cada noche grupos incontables saldrán a lo largo del trecho más peligroso de la frontera. La perspectiva para los meses y años próximos es desconsoladora.

(Claudia E. Smith es abogada de la oficina de la Fundación de Ayuda Legal Rural de California en Oceanside.)

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## Un Rayito De Luz

Por Sofia Martinez

Conviene explicar que es lo que se ha de venerar en las imágenes de Cristo, o de María, o de los Santos, para que todos evitemos darles algún culto pagano. Si vemos de qué materia están hechas, o formadas, no son otra cosa que una porción de madera o piedra, o yeso, o metal, grabado o tallado, y consideradas así materialmente, no deberían de ser veneradas ni reverenciadas; porque sería venerar madera o metales. Pero si las consid-

eramos únicamente como imágenes que representan a Jesucristo, o a la Virgen o a los santos, entonces podemos y debemos venerarlas y reverenciarlas, porque la veneración y el culto que les damos, no se las damos a ellas, sino a Cristo, María, o los santos que esas imágenes representan.

Y, así, cuando nos descubrimos la cabeza, o nos incamos delante de las imágenes de Jesucristo, de la Santísima Virgen, y de los santos que representan, veneramos en ellas a Jesucristo, a la Santísima Virgen, o a los santos que representan.

Si la gente malta estudiara de buena fe esta materia, no insultaría el culto de las imágenes, y si los fieles estuvieran mejor educados en este punto de nuestra religión, tampoco habría acerca de los tantos abusos, que deben de ser totalmente deterrados. (Luc. 1, 48).

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