

Quixote Center

at 50



1976-2026

*“Inspiration comes from the satiric idealism and
nearsightedness of Cervantes’s dauntless Don
Quixote, tempered by our roots in the Gospel
and in Roman Catholic social justice teaching
which has found modern expression in
liberation theology.”*

–Bill Callahan

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Introduction

As the Quixote Center enters its 50th year, I am astounded to discover that I have been involved with the Center for more than half of its history. Like many long-term supporters of the Quixote Center, I first became aware of it when I met some of the movers and shakers from the earliest days of the organization—Bill Callahan, Maureen Fiedler, Jeannine Gramick, and Dolly Pomerleau. As I got to know them, I gradually learned more and more about their work and the organization they had started years ago. I also observed that the organization shared their personal characteristics. They were passionate, committed do-gooders, tireless troublemakers, and dreamers of all sorts of impossible dreams. They were also highly practical, and while I would hate to call them cheap, I would say that they calculated a dollar in terms of its buying power in Nicaragua or Haiti, where at that time 75% of the population lived on about \$2.00 a day. They drew me in by showing me needs that I could satisfy—school supplies for kids in Nicaragua, for example, and later, construction of a family home that cost less than a one-week cruise. Education was always part of their mission. They aimed to make lasting change not only in the lives and circumstances of people they served but also in the hearts and minds of their supporters.

It is rare for a nonprofit to survive for 50 years, especially a small nonprofit like the Quixote Center. Estimates put the 50 year survival rate at about 15%. What enabled the Quixote Center to live through five decades—eight presidents, the AIDS health emergency, the global financial crisis of 2008, and the COVID-19 global pandemic, to name just a few of

the challenges and changes? The commitment of the people who devoted themselves to the work is obviously one key, as is their willingness and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Another is that the Quixote Center chose to trust individuals, not governments, to support the work. Donors have supported the Center faithfully since the beginning, and all donations have been welcomed and put to the best use, from the largest to the smallest. (When I volunteered for a while processing donations, we used to receive two \$1.00 bills in an envelope every month from one supporter. Perhaps we still do.) And finally, Quixote's staff always kept their sense of humor, and with it a genuine humility about themselves and their work. As Bill Callahan wrote in his poem Crabgrass Christians, "We are blessed with a merry God. Indeed, we are the entertainment."

For a mission-driven organization to continue, the torch must be passed from the founders to succeeding generations. Transitions like this are difficult, and many nonprofits do not survive them. At this point, none of the original founders remain on staff at Quixote Center: all have either retired or moved on to establish their own organizations. But I am happy to report that the torch has been successfully passed! The next generation has taken the torch and the symbolic "Sancho". They have the same commitment, the same kind of dreams, and they also bring updated skills and technological know-how to navigate the next half century. They epitomize Margaret Mead's statement on change: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."



Nancy Sulfridge
Board Chair 2015-2026

Beginnings

In the beginning there were two young idealists: Bill Callahan and Dolly Pomerleau.

It was 1975, a heady time for people committed to making the country and the world a more just and peaceful place. Richard Nixon had resigned the presidency in 1974 because of his involvement in the break-in of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate Hotel and the cover-up that followed.



Bill and Dolly

The deadly and divisive Vietnam War ended. Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment was “just around the corner.” The fight for racial justice continued with a focus on defeating discriminatory practices in housing, education, and employment. Gay rights advocates were urging Congress to pass the recently introduced civil rights bill for gay men and lesbians. And many American Catholics, frustrated by the slow pace of reforms promised a decade earlier by the Second Vatican Council, were eager to press forward.

The founders were gifted organizers and unapologetic dreamers. They wanted to create a place that would “nurture dreams and laughter in the midst of struggles, to provide hospitality, celebration, and prayer.” They chose the name Quixote to honor the ideals of Cervantes’ starry-eyed knight—faith, hope, and love—and because its founders were intimately associated with the Catholic Church (a Jesuit priest and a former Sister of St. Joseph), the Center’s “true north” was—and remains—Catholic Social Teaching and Liberation Theology and its manifestation in theologies from the global south.

Mission and Goals

The ultimate goal of the founders was to achieve structural change in the church, in society, and in government that would support justice for all people. From the beginning, the founders determined that the Center would be independent of government or church control. It would rely on support from like-minded people and organizations and remain free to follow its own star.

What does it take to start an organization? A dream and a few useful tools. With gifts of a stapler, staples, a three hole punch, and an old typewriter, the Center was officially founded on January 1, 1976. The team quickly grew to five, with Bob Nugent, Maureen Fiedler, and Jeannine Gramick joining Dolly and Bill. They created a unique organizational structure. They agreed that each would receive the same salary (initially \$6,500/year). Decisions were made by consensus, and all staff were designated as “codirectors.” (The codirector and salary equality model worked well for many years—until it didn’t.)

Women in the Church and Society

The team decided to begin the work of transformation in their own backyard and set their sights on eliminating the entrenched prejudices faced by women in the Catholic Church.

Priests for Equality (PFE), a group formed by Bill Callahan, had launched its “Charter of Equality” in 1975, demanding that the Catholic hierarchy and the Vatican rethink the tradition of a male-only clergy. The Charter affirmed the need to ordain women (among other affirmations) and supported the Equal Rights Amendment. At its peak, PFE had 2,000 members in 34 countries. After the founding of the Quixote Center, Priests for Equality became a project of the Quixote Center.

The Center set out to debunk common arguments against ordaining women: 1) People were not ready for women priests; and 2) Women are not psychologically fit to be priests.

- The Center commissioned the Gallup organization to conduct four surveys of Catholic opinion on women's ordination over several years. They demonstrated growing support for women priests.
- The Center conducted a parish experiment demonstrating that exposure to women's participation in the liturgy answered the question "Are Catholics Ready?" as described in a publication authored by Maureen Fiedler and Dolly Pomerleau.
- The Center published a book by psychologist Fran Ferder, *Called to Break Bread*, which refuted the argument that women were not psychologically fit to be priests.

The Quixote Center and the Women's Ordination Conference (WOC) collaborated on many projects. Dolly Pomerleau took a year's leave from the Quixote Center to organize the second conference, which met in Baltimore in 1978.

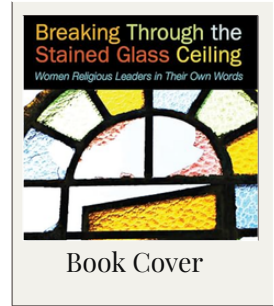


Maureen Fiedler

Maureen Fiedler, a Sister of Loretto, was a key member of the Quixote Center team from its earliest days and remained involved until her retirement in 2018. Active in the struggle for Congressional passage of the Equal Rights Amendment [ERA] and founder of Catholics Act for the ERA, Maureen was among a group of women who fasted for 37 days in Springfield, IL in 1982 in support of the state's campaign to ratify the ERA. The Illinois legislature finally ratified the ERA in 2018.

Maureen and the Quixote Center launched Interfaith Voices, a public radio program forced on the intersection of theology and public policy. She hosted the hour-long program, which aired on 71 public and community radio stations in the U.S. and Canada until her retirement.

Maureen was a commentator on several NPR programs and frequent guest speaker on topics ranging from women's rights to the politics of religion; she edited several books, including *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Religious Leaders in Their Own Words*.



When Pope John Paul II visited Washington, D.C. in 1979, Quixote Center and Priests for Equality collaborated with the Women's Ordination Conference in a peaceful protest on behalf of women's ordination to the Catholic priesthood. The protest culminated at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception when, during the Mass presided over by the pontiff, Catholic sisters and others wore blue arm bands in support of women priests.

The Equal Rights Amendment, passed but not ratified in 1972, promised to guarantee equal rights for all Americans, regardless of sex. Maureen Fiedler, working through the political action committee, "Catholics Act for the ERA," organized lobbying and education campaigns aimed at achieving the number of states needed for full ratification.

Gays and Lesbians in the Church

In 1978, the center hired Jeannine Grammick, then a Sister of Notre Dame, and Bob Nugent, a Catholic priest, both of whom were committed to eliminating the virulent homophobia existing in the Catholic Church. They began by organizing a workshop named “New Ways” that attracted scores of Catholics and others interested in



Jeannine Grammick
and Bob Nugent

supporting gay and lesbian equality within various religious traditions. The interest in, and success of, this workshop led Jeannine and Bob to create New Ways Ministry, a separate organization that flourishes today.

Pursuing Justice: The Karen Silkwood Case

The Center’s activities quickly diversified to include the Karen Silkwood case. In 1974, Karen Silkwood, a laboratory technician and union organizer, had testified before the Atomic Energy Commission about lax safety procedures at the Kerr-McGee Cimarron Fuel Fabrication Site. She herself suffered from plutonium contamination. After her death in a car accident, her family sued the nuclear plant for the plutonium contamination. At the Quixote Center, Sara Nelson, Dan Sheehan (chief counsel), and Bill Davis coordinated the three-year lawsuit. The jury awarded \$10.5 million to Silkwood’s heirs. After multiple appeals and two trips to the Supreme Court, the case was settled with a payment of \$1.38 million to the estate. The process had its tense moments when anonymous death threats were

received (but thankfully not acted on). In 1983, Meryl Streep starred in the highly acclaimed movie about this case, “Silkwood.” Nelson, Sheehan, and Davis went on to found the Christic Institute to continue their ministry of litigation.

The Jesuits Censure Bill Callahan

Progressive theologians and clergy were increasingly pressured by church authorities to cease expressing their views publicly. In 1978, Bill was “silenced” (ordered not to publicly advocate) on the subject of women’s ordination. In 1979, he was ordered to leave the Center. He left briefly but returned. The struggle lasted until 1991, when the Jesuits officially expelled him.

Early Support

As the Quixote Center was starting its work, a group of Catholics in Northern Virginia broke away from their parish over a dispute about shared responsibility in decision-making. The group became “Good Shepherd Catholics for Shared Responsibility”. Bill Callahan ministered with them for several years; they in turn provided crucial financial support for the Center’s early efforts.

Quest for Peace in Nicaragua

In the early 1980s, the Center expanded its focus to address the increasingly volatile situations faced by several Central American countries. The new Sandinista leadership in Nicaragua was struggling with armed resistance from the Contras, and the country was in turmoil. When the U.S. President



Quest for Peace logo

Ronald Regan allocated \$27 million to the Contra campaign, the Center pledged to raise an equal amount in the form of humanitarian aid for the people of Nicaragua. Thus began the project named Quest for Peace (Quest).

Quest dominated the Center's efforts for the next several years. Staff size increased to 26 members in order to manage the collection of massive amounts of aid in warehouses in Chicago, Seattle and other cities. Simultaneously, the Center's lobbying and communications efforts on Capitol Hill intensified.

"...the framework of liberation theology has inspired the Quixote Center. The stark reality of economic inequality challenges us to seek structural change and stand in solidarity with people in need." –Bill Callahan

Gaining Momentum and Adapting to New Realities

By its 10th anniversary in 1986, the Center was well established and recognized as a major presence in the peace and justice movement. The country and the world were confronted by a host of new realities: the Reagan Presidency, the beginning of the AIDS crisis, and the weakening of the Soviet Union, to name a few. Work had begun on something scientists called "the Internet," and Geraldine Ferraro and Sandra Day O'Connor were the first U.S. women to become a nominee for Vice President and a Supreme Court Justice, respectively.

John Paul II, the Catholic Church's new pope, was faced with governing an increasingly divided church. The clergy sex abuse scandal was gaining attention, as was the Church's stance on social, political and bioethical issues. Increasing numbers of American Catholics were questioning the Church's position on abortion, contraception, IVF, surrogate motherhood, homosexuality, and women's role in the Church.

Despite these challenges, the 1980s saw increased attention to social justice issues. The murders of Bishop Oscar Romero and four Catholic missionaries in El Salvador, the U.S.'s role in the Iran-Contra affair, the fight to end Apartheid in South Africa and other social justice causes demanded greater scrutiny, support and activism.

Catholics Speak Out

Catholics Speak Out (CSO) was created in response to efforts within the Catholic Church to rein in progressive ideas and behaviors. The project organized church members willing to express—in words and actions—their support of Vatican II's call for a more inclusive, loving, judgement-free church.



Twenty-plus years after the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council (1963-65), which promised changes supported by progressive Catholics, the pace of those anticipated reforms had stagnated. By 1987, discussion of women's roles with the church had dwindled to a mere whisper.

Center staff members Sarita Hudson and Cletus Wessels led CSO when it launched in 1987. Among its early efforts was supporting Archbishop Hunthausen of Seattle, a victim of a campaign by conservative Catholics to convince the Vatican to remove him from his post. The Center gathered 2,700 signatures for a four-page ad in the National Catholic Reporter requesting that the Vatican reverse its decision, which it did, eventually reinstating the archbishop.



Ludmilla Javrova
with Dolly Pomerleau

In 1991, CSO and the Women's Ordination Conference co-sponsored a private visit by Ludmila Javorova of the Czech Republic, who had been secretly ordained in 1970 in the underground church during the Communist occupation. (The women's ordination movement in the U.S. officially began in 1975.) Miriam Therese Winter followed up by writing the biography "Out of the Depths."

Let Live and Equal Justice Challenge the Death Penalty

In 1988, the Quixote Center's Dick Dieter launched Let Live, a campaign to eliminate the death penalty in Maryland. In the 1980s, there had been a significant increase in new death sentences and a rise in executions. Within the campaign's first 18 months, it initiated a poll revealing dissatisfaction with capital punishment. As the result of the Center's efforts in partnership with other state and national coalitions, Maryland abolished the death penalty for people under the age of 18, a first step toward the eventual abolition of the death penalty in the state in 2013.

That year, the Center accepted staff member Jane Henderson proposed to build on the success of Let Live and develop a nationwide campaign to abolish the death penalty. The new campaign became Equal Justice, which continued to work for abolition of the death penalty nationally.

Strengthening Quest for Peace

The dire political and humanitarian situation in Nicaragua intensified. So did the Center's response. Its pledge to counter U.S. Government support of the Contras with humanitarian aid led to Quixote Centter shipping hundreds of 40-ft. cargo container shipments of food, clothing, educational materials, and medical supplies to Nicaragua from several U.S. ports. Quest staff coordinated the more than 600 groups across the U.S. and Canada providing donated goods. In Nicaragua, the Jesuit-sponsored Institute of John XXIII ensured that the aid was delivered where most needed. The grassroots Quest campaign was so impressive that it got national media attention and received Ted Turner's Better World Society's humanitarian award in 1988.

Integral to the humanitarian aid efforts was the Center's goal to change U.S. policy toward Nicaragua and end support of the Contras. The Center initiated a quick response team, the "Central American Telephone Tree," comprising 85 groups throughout the country that contacted U.S. government officials on hot-button topics related to Central America. In 1987, Maureen Fiedler and Bill Callahan testified before a House committee about the effects of Contra aid. The Center was a key player motivating grassroots activity against further Contra support.

In 1988, a bill calling for “humanitarian aid to the families” of the Contras was defeated –a turning point for U.S. policy makers with respect to aiding insurgency groups.

Shipments of humanitarian aid to Nicaragua continued after the end of the Contra War, and the partnership and friendship between the Center and the Institute of John XXIII grew. After Hurricane Mitch ripped through Nicaragua in 1998, killing 38,000 people and leaving tens of thousands homeless, the Center and the Institute of John XXIII initiated an emergency housing program in Polsoltega, a community destroyed by a mile-wide mudslide. The community was completely rebuilt with improvements, including a latrine for each house.

Ketxu Amezua, Quest for Peace’s “arms and legs; heart and soul,” was based at the Institute John XXIII in Managua (now shuttered by the Nicaraguan government). A formidable organizer, Ketxu managed the distribution of humanitarian aid sent in hundreds of the cargo containers that the center coordinated—even in the midst of the Contra War.



Ketxu Amezua

Her specialty at the John XXIII Institute was overseeing the construction of thousands homes in rural communities throughout Nicaragua. Most importantly, Ketxu inspired rural people, especially women, to achieve things they never thought possible. “Si, se puede, Yes we can,” was her belief then and now.

HAITI REBORN

After decades of authoritarian rule by the Duvaliers, Haitians were buoyed by the election of Jean Bertrand Aristide in 1990. The new president promised to raise the Haitian people “from misery to dignified poverty” by establishing a government of “dignity, democracy, participation and transparency.”

Dolly Pomerleau and Bill Callahan visited Haiti in 1991, accompanied by Ketxu Amezua of the Institute of John XXIII, in search of a partner organization. But Aristide’s humanitarian ideals threatened Haiti’s wealthy elite, and sectors of the military and police ousted the president in a coup d’etat in September of 1991. A bloodbath that saw thousands of Haitians killed and all progressive efforts stifled, followed.

The Center continued efforts in support of Haiti and the reinstatement of Aristide. In February 1993, a month after President Bill Clinton took office, the Center coordinated Haiti Solidarity Week, a nationwide event that aimed to keep Haiti at the top of the new U.S. president’s agenda. Aristide returned to office in 1994.

Through contacts with the Religious of Jesus and Mary in Haiti, the Center partnered with the Jean Marie Vincent Formation Center (named for a much-admired Haitian Catholic priest) to establish community-based initiatives. The first project was a reforestation effort to stop erosion that washed out roads near Tet Mon, a barren mountain just outside the community of Gros Morne. The initial plan was to plant 100,000 trees a year for 10 years to create a forest on the mountain. The forest is now complete and thriving.

“The Quixote Center fosters eight projects of its own and is the fiscal sponsor of a Brazil human rights project. Although each project seeks its own funding, the Quixote Center is the umbrella that supports the projects when they are launched and carries them over hard times. All staff members, regardless of job description or seniority, receive the same base salary of \$21,500.”

—Excerpt from QC 1997 annual report

Priests for Equality

By 1993, Priests for Equality had grown to include 2,300 Catholic priests who had pledged to work for gender equality in civil society and the Roman Catholic Church. Support for such reform was strong, and real progress seemed possible. However, repercussions from the Church’s hierarchy came swiftly, forcing the group to adopt a low profile and a new focus. They chose to make a lasting impact by translating the entire Bible into inclusive language. Led by Center codirector Joe Dearborn, assisted by Mark Buckley, a team of biblical scholars tackled this huge, 10-year undertaking. Although Priests for Equality is now inactive, *The Inclusive Bible* is a worthy legacy that continues to be used in many faith communities today.

The Risks of “Speaking Truth to

Confrontations with the powers-that-be are not for the faint of heart. And when the powers in question are the Catholic Church and the United State Government, the odds most assuredly are not in favor of the “confrontees.”

When the Jesuits ordered Bill Callahan to “cease and desist” his work in support of women’s ordination to the Roman Catholic priesthood, he tried– and tried again–to convince his superiors that excluding women was wrong, short-sighted and unacceptable. His arguments fell on deaf ears. When presented with the either/or option (either stop promoting women’s ordination or leave the order), Bill chose the latter. The Jesuits officially expelled him in 1991, and he then doubled down on his commitment to make the church a more loving, inclusive body.

When the U.S. government persisted in its illegal support of the Nicaraguan “Contras” in an effort to bring down the Sandinista government in the 1980s, the Quixote Center sent tons of humanitarian aid to the country. In response, the Reagan Administration launched an investigation into the center’s operations to determine if they had smuggled guns in with the containers of aid. Center leadership refused to turn over the documents investigators demanded [including mailing lists and financial records] and sought support from Maryland Congressman Steny Hoyer. When the dust settled, the Department of the Treasury found “no evidence of arms smuggling.”

In June 1986, the center received notice that it would be the subject of a “routine IRS audit” to determine if it had exceeded the permissible level of lobbying by a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. At issue [this time] was the 24-page tabloid *Nicaragua: A Look at the Reality* published by the center and edited by Maureen Fiedler and Dolly Pomerleau. The publication sold more than 300,000 copies. It was a valuable reference for U.S. legislators, and used in the center’s intense Quest for Peace campaign, as well as by every other U.S.-based Nicaragua solidarity group. A tax lawyer oversaw the two-year audit process that found no wrongdoing on the center's part.

Offshoot

1976 **New Ways Ministry**, a gay-positive ministry that advocates for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Catholics, became the first offshoot from the Quixote Center.

1980 **The Christic Institute**, a public interest law firm founded by Sara Nelson, Danny Sheehan, and Bill Davis, combined investigation, litigation, education, and organizing into a unique model for social reform in the United States. It was succeeded by the Romero Institute.purification systems.

1983 **Windmills, Inc.**, Quixote Center's lobbying arm, was formed to increase Catholic support for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.

1984 **Catholics for the Common Good**, a Political Action Committee (PAC) was founded by Quixote staff to support the Mondale/Ferraro presidential campaign in response to condemnation of Geraldine Ferraro by the U.S. Catholic bishops.

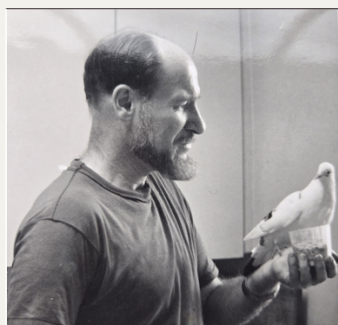
1986 **Potters for Peace** was established by Center volunteer Mary Chapman and Dolly as an ad hoc pottery sale to benefit Nicaraguan potters. The goal was to support the work of talented Nicaraguan potters in their home country by making their crafts available to art lovers in the U.S. Dolly organized large successful exhibitions in several cities. The work of Potters for Peace eventually led to the design and production of ceramic water filters for homes without water purification systems.

2001 **Interfaith Voices**, a radio news magazine covering the world of religion, spirituality, and ethics syndicated on more than 70 radio stations, was founded by Maureen Fiedler, who hosted the program until her retirement in 2018.

2008 **Equal Justice USA**, a long-term Quixote Center program working to abolish the death penalty, became independent. Under Shari Silverstein's leadership, the program moved to New York City and grew rapidly. Following the 2024 election, federal funding of Equal Justice was withdrawn, and the program closed abruptly.

We Remember Bill Callahan

We remember Bill Callahan for much more than his activism and outspoken resistance to injustice and the Church and government. Bill's life was marked by a wide range of achievements—from scientific work that contributed to medical advances, to reviving an orchard during his Jesuit formation, to co-founding the Quixote Center in 1976. He combined determination and a deep commitment to social justice with a genuine passion for farming and building community.



Bill Callahan

New Millenium; New Challenges

The New Millennium marked the Center's 25th year of commitment to building a world more justly loving. The Center faced new challenges in the form of governmental injustices, economic crises, and environmental disasters.

Haiti Reborn

Political and social unrest in Haiti had reached crisis mode by 2015. Responding to pressures from the International Monetary Fund, the Haitian government enforced cost-cutting policies, including a reduction of fuel subsidies, that resulted in mass protests in the country's larger cities.

Although our partners in Gros Morne felt the political tensions, they did not impact the reforestation or other efforts of our partners at the Jean Marie Vincent Center. In just a few years' time, a forest was taking shape on Tet Mon, dozens of workshops on agro-ecology took place, and new initiatives were launched: a mobile veterinary clinic, a community goat program, and a chicken co-op to provide eggs for home and market.



Jean Marie Vincent
Formation Center



Training at JMVC
Center

On October 6, 2018, a 5.9 magnitude earthquake struck northern Haiti causing extensive damage in Gros Morne. Several schools, a pediatric ward, and almost all two-story buildings and hundreds of homes were affected by the quake. Quixote donors responded generously to the Center's request for emergency relief funds to help the people of Gros Morne rebuild their homes and livelihoods.

"For 35 years, the Quixote Center has gathered together people of faith and conscience to organize highly effective campaigns for systemic change."

–2010 Annual Report

Quest for Peace

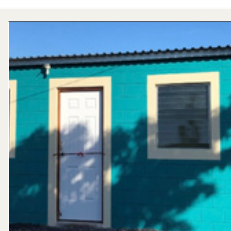
The Center had achieved a solid history of supporting development programs in Nicaragua, from housing to pharmacies to water pumps for villages. However, the political situation in Nicaragua was dire by the second decade of the 21st century, as President Daniel Ortega's anti-democratic policies led to mass protests in 2018 and subsequent repression and human rights abuses. His government jailed many rivals and canceled the operating permits of more than 5,000 non-governmental organizations from 2018 to 2024, eventually including the Center's long-time partner, The Institute of John XXIII (The Roncali Institute). This halted the Center's immediate involvement in Nicaragua. The Center then began seeking new opportunities for partnership in Nicaragua.



House built through
Homes of Hope



Home Construction



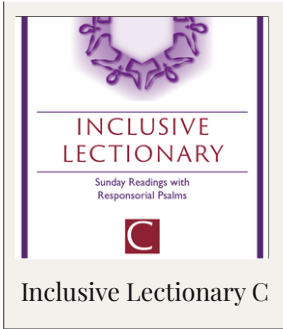
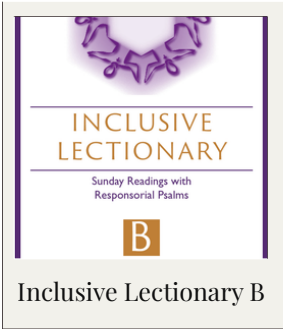
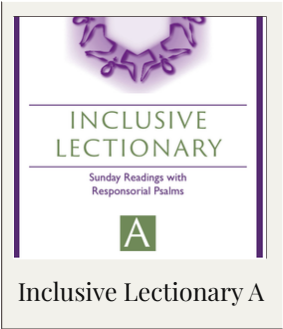
House built through
Homes of Hope

Catholics Speak Out

The struggle of progressive Catholics to effect positive change in the institutional Catholic Church took on even greater urgency with the publication of additional reports documenting the scale of sexual abuse in the Church and the hierarchy’s persistent coverups. While the Center remained committed to renewal in the Catholic Church, its focus was increasingly on social injustice in Haiti and Latin America. In 2019, after 20 years of “tilting at windmills”, the Catholics Speak Out program ended. The Quixote Center continues to support other organizations that work for change within the Catholic Church.



Words Matter: The Center translated, published, and disseminated the Inclusive Bible and *The Inclusive Language Lectionary* series. Priests for Equality sent an *Inclusive Bible* to approximately 250 active bishops in the United States. Two of them sent a thank you note.



Old Dreams, New Directions

Deteriorating conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean caused people to leave their homes in search of better lives in the United States. Gang violence, lack of employment opportunities, and natural disasters were the main drivers for the ever-increasing number of immigrants seeking a new life in the United States. The same situations that caused people to flee Nicaragua and Haiti were making it increasingly difficult for the Quixote Center to maintain program activities in those locations. The Center expanded its focus to include the root causes of migration and the humanitarian needs of the migrants themselves.

Haiti Reborn

Haiti Reborn remains a major focus of the Center's support. The political and economic situation in Haiti by 2022 was grim. Gang violence was spreading from the cities to rural areas, making travel to the island country by Center staff unsafe. However, its long-term partner in Gros Morne was able to receive funds from the U.S. and continue program work. The Center has never wavered from its goal in Haiti: to diminish extreme poverty so that the people of Haiti can sustain themselves and live in peace and dignity.

Gang violence killed 8,200 people between January 2025 and March 2026, with more than 1.4 million Haitians internally displaced. Weak U.S. gun laws and weak enforcement of existing laws allow illegal gun trafficking throughout the Caribbean and are some of the main causes of Haiti's tragic cycle of violence-political chaos-displacement-hunger-death. The Quixote Center coordinates efforts to slow the flow of illegal guns and ammunition from the U.S. to Haiti and other countries in the Western Hemisphere.



Meeting with Members
of Congress



Meeting with Members
of Congress



Fighting for TPS
at the Supreme Court



Rally for Haiti

In spite of the difficulties of working in Haiti at the present time, in 2023 the Center initiated a new program in Haiti's south. DCCH, a member of Caritas, partnered with Quixote Center in 2023 to conduct a needs assessment among rural communities around Les Cayes to identify investment priorities. After consulting with hundreds of community members through interviews and focus groups, together we designed a project that provides targeted investments in agroecological training, animal care, and women empowerment through microloans and small business ventures. In 2025, we launched the Socio-Economic Recovery Program as a scalable and replicable pilot project working with 100 rural families reaching up to 1000 people. This community-led initiative aims to improve their income and food security while building resilience and eliminating dependence on outside assistance. DCCH distributes seeds and livestock as loans where recipients return the same quantity of seeds and the first offspring to the program for redistribution. In 2026 we included an additional 100 families.



Training in Land
Management



Man in a field of
Vetiver



Yam Seedlings



Constructing animal
enclosures



Meeting with new
participants in Tricon



Participants receiving
emergency funds

Migrant Justice

Migrant Justice dominates Quixote Center attention. A few years ago, support was needed for desperate men, women and children making the arduous trek to the U.S. looking for physical and financial security. Today, however, draconian immigration policies have caused a flow of migrants in the opposite direction, many of whom remain stranded in Mexico or other countries where they have no connections. Alongside its partners in Panama and Mexico, the Franciscan Network for Migrants (RFM), the Quixote Center now provides support for these stateless and vulnerable people at migrant shelters and meal programs in Panama and Mexico, each of which provides food, housing, and medical care, as well as psychological and emotional support.



Participants on
Solidarity trip



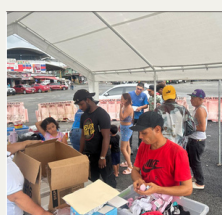
Participants on
Solidarity trip



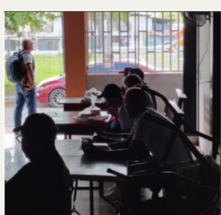
Participants on
Solidarity trip



Walking with Franciscans
and Migrants



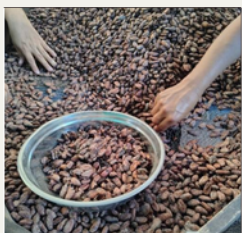
Meal distribution
at Paso Canoas



Migrants at RFM's Meal
Program in Paso Canoas

Quest for Peace

Working in Nicaragua remains important to the Quixote Center. In the aftermath of the 2018 social unrest in Nicaragua, our partners with Institute John XXIII as well as over 5000 other NGOs were forced to shut down. Quixote Center had to suspend our programs while exploring new ways to support the most vulnerable communities in Nicaragua. Following our 2023 visit, we partnered with PeaceWorks to initiate a revolving loan fund for a coffee cooperative, El Porvenir, so that they can bring their harvest to the market. In 2025, we launched a new program with PeaceWorks and Green Empowerment to support members of a cocoa cooperative, CacaoNica, to sell their cocoa beans at a higher price by complying with organic certification standards. Under the current country conditions, working directly with cooperatives is the most effective way to support Nicaraguan farmers.



Cacao Beans



QC staff visits
partners in Waslala



Cacao Tree



Cacao Producer



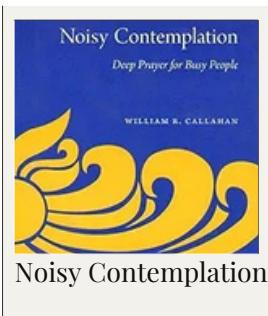
El Porvenir



Cocoa producing family
with new latrine

QC Publications

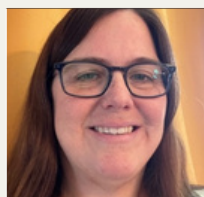
Are Catholics Ready?
Agenda for Justice
Called to Break Bread?
Karen Silkwood–Union Sister
The Wind is Rising
Look! A New Thing in the Americas
Vigil Service for El Salvador
Jason and Clytemnestra
Noisy Contemplation
Nicaragua: A Look at the Reality
Honduras: A Look at the Reality
Miriam's Song
Inclusive Bible
Let Haiti Live
Fierce Legion of Friends



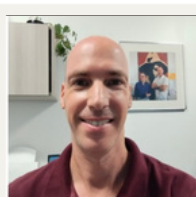
Current Staff



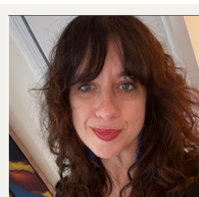
Kim Lamberty
Executive Director



Marianne Baldwin
Operations Manager



Fred Schick
Program Manager



Danette Dennison
Communications Manager

Current Board of Directors



Claudette David
President



Keith Bolek
Vice President



Serge Hyacinthe
Treasurer



Dolly Pomerleau



Frank DeBernardo



Nancy Sulfridge

Outstanding Staff and Volunteers

We are deeply grateful to all the staff and volunteers who have dedicated their time and talent to the Center and to work for justice by reaching out with loving hands.

50th Anniversary Celebration

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Keith Bolek



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