

El Salvador has one of the highest rates of femicide, or gender-motivated killing of women, in the world. An estimated 2,521 women have been murdered in El Salvador since 2009, an average of 420 femicides each year. In Guatemala, over 5,000 women and girls were violently killed between 2008 and 2015. Mexico also faces an ongoing crisis of gender-based violence: 7 women were killed every day on average in 2013 and 2014, 63% of women over 15 years of age have experienced some form of gender violence, and thousands of women and young girls have disappeared since 2006. Human rights organizations have also expressed concern about the rampant culture of impunity that allows perpetrators to avoid punishment for committing these horrific crimes: in Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala, fewer than 3% of reported femicide cases are resolved by the judicial system.

Prayer for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Our Lady of Guadalupe,
You have long been present to the sorrows
Of the people of the Americas.
You brought to those without power
Your image, your presence,
Your grace and gifts, like brilliant roses in winter.

Pray for us to be present to your beloved people,
Especially to those women living in fear:
In Mexico, in Guatemala, in El Salvador,
Where young women continue to disappear,
Where female bodies are found mutilated,
Where those in power do nothing,
Dismissing the dread,
Dismissing the dark violence against women.

O Lady of December,
Wrapped in a poor cloak on a barren hill,
We wait for you to show us Christ's Light again,
To remind us all of the dignity of every human person,
To pray for us to be generous with justice,
Bringing it like roses to your daughters,
To all those who have been waiting for hope. Amen.

—Jane Deren, Ph.D.



Painting by Rain Rinin: <http://bit.ly/2dn3R9X>