

## REMEMBERING LUPITA

*This past March 4, about an hour before my class for my course on the Pedagogy of Paulo Freire was to begin, we received news that the previous night one of my students, Lupita Chávez, had suddenly passed away. Lupita had been enrolled in my class, and it was the first time that I had ever had a student pass away while enrolled in a course with me.*

*Of course, the loss of a student is always painful, but Lupita's death was especially felt by all who work and study at the Theological Community of Mexico. In over 25 years of working at the Theological Community, I cannot think of any student who has ever been more loved and appreciated than Lupita by all who knew her and worked with her. That morning during my Zoom class and then the following week in a memorial service held by Zoom, we took the time to share what her presence in our lives had meant (see photo below from my last Zoom class with Lupita).*



*Lupita (which is short for Guadalupe) was a lifelong Roman Catholic who was very active in the feminist movement in the Catholic Church. After attending a large event on feminist theology held at our school and becoming acquainted with our programs, Lupita enrolled as a student in 2016. Because she lived a couple of hours away from our school on the opposite side of the city, she was only able to take classes a couple of days a week.*

*For over a decade Lupita had been teaching in a Roman Catholic school that trains lay leaders named "Centro Bíblico Apostólico" (Apostolic Biblical Center). There she taught courses in the area of Bible and also led Bible studies and other educational and liturgical activities for Catholic lay people, especially women.*

*What made Lupita (in purple sweater below) stand out most from our other students was not merely that she was a Roman Catholic who participated in a lay order devoted to the Virgin Mary, nor her tattoos and dyed hair, but her caring and effusive personality. She was always wearing a smile and handing out hugs to all, and many of our Protestant and Evangelical students were not accustomed to being treated so warmly and generously by someone who was Catholic.*



*One of Lupita's passions was cooking. She regularly brought food to share with others at school. One of our Pentecostal students who comes from a very remote town four hours away from school recalled how one semester Lupita was always waiting for their 8:00 class with breakfast for him, knowing how hungry he was after leaving his home at 4:00 a.m., even though she had to leave home early in the morning herself to get to class on time.*

*Others recalled how Lupita was always engaging others with her penetrating questions and the frankness and openness she displayed in her dealings with all. She had the gift of challenging people in ways that built them up and made them feel good about themselves rather than tearing them down. She will be sorely missed by all of us.*



**OUR VACCINATION EXPERIENCE**

*My students and coworkers continue to share with me the painful loss due to the COVID virus of many people in their lives who are greatly loved in the way that Lupita was. These include family members, friends, and members of their churches. Fortunately, however, efforts to get people vaccinated have been advancing and many things are reopening. Several of my students have told me of all of the strict measures that churches must take with the Mexican government in order to be given permission to reopen. These include keeping detailed records regarding cleaning the church building and keeping track of precisely which people come to church.*

*In March, Mexico began vaccinating all adults who are over 60 years old for free. That includes Alicia and me. The government has been buying vaccines from many different countries, including the U.S., Great Britain, Russia, and China. People over 60 registered online, and then vaccinations were scheduled by municipality. All are given an appointment depending on the first letter of their last name. It usually takes about 5 or 6 days to vaccinate everyone in a particular municipality.*



*Alicia and I went for our first dosis on April 2, which also happened to be Good Friday. The location they had established was at a school only a few blocks from our house.*

*When we arrived at 10:00 a.m., the line was over a third of a mile long! We were told we could try returning later, and we did. The line had gone down, so instead of having to wait for about an hour and a half in line, we got in after about 25 minutes. However, the sight of all of the people waiting inside was also daunting:*



*It took another half an hour for our turn to get registered, and then after another wait they had us sit around a table with 10 people each, where they applied the vaccine (below). The vaccine that had been designated for our municipality was the Russian “Sputnik” vaccine. Since the only vaccinations available in Mexico are the ones provided by the government and individuals cannot get vaccinated elsewhere, one either has to get the vaccine provided by the government or not get vaccinated at all.*



*Alicia and I got our second dosis on Tuesday, April 27, so now we’re all set. Next month they will start vaccinating people age 50-59.*

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