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Columbus plaque on a Catholic Church in San Salvador.



Niña II under way

# SALVADOR REDISCOVERED

By John M. Haffert

**T**he most famous *Catholic Traveler* in American History is now recalled by the brave feat of nine men . . . including a priest . . . who tried a few months ago to follow in the wake of Columbus and discovered that his voyage was one of "incredible luck".

At least that is the way it was described by Robert Marx . . . a 29 year old skin-diver who was the only American aboard the replica of Columbus' *Niña* which left Spain last September and reached San Salvador at Christmas. Five hurricanes, hundreds of miles out of course, and twice as many days as used by Columbus convinced Marx that the original voyage which ended in the discovery of America, was *really* extraordinary.

## Secret Vote

One of radio's best known interviewers, Martha Dean, asked Marx if the nine men who set out from Spain in the replica of the *Niña* thought of turning back when they ran into difficulties. He replied that not only had they thought of it, but at one point they decided . . . under cloak of black night . . . to vote on it secretly. He had really thought the vote would be for turning back, yet it turned out that all, despite terrible privation and hardship, voted to continue. They almost sank. The rudder broke and they wallowed in the sea at the mercy of the waves which sank two large ships within one hundred miles of them. Their food rotted and they were eating seaweed. They had no water.

Yet, to relive history . . . they kept their little ship headed toward San Salvador.

Finally, on Christmas, they sight-

ed land . . . over two months late. They clustered at the rail, looking at the long green island, with emotions only men who suffered so much could know. They sang the *Salve Regina* ("Hail Holy Queen").

Father Sagaseta (the *Niña's* chaplain), Lt. Carlos Etayo (her commander), and the other seven men who stood and sang the *Salve Regina* off San Salvador just a few months ago, were singing as CATHOLIC TRAVELER was being printed with an article about that same island, telling what they would find there. Both magazine and sailors were trying to say the same thing: Let's remember!

Nine men crossed the ocean to set foot where Columbus did . . . and yet very, very few Americans have ever been there. Very few even know precisely where it is. The Bishop of the Bahamas, the Most Reverend James Haggerty, feels that more American Catholics should be *stirred* by the significance of the voyage of Columbus.

## "Luck" was Providence

We know, of course, that the "incredible luck" of Columbus . . . which gave him favorable winds all the way and brought him quickly to islands he didn't know existed . . . was Providence. As Cardinal Cushing says, God had saved this continent for the persecuted and the downtrodden as a birthplace of freedom. It was a Catholic discovery.

If we all can't re-cross the Atlantic in the wake of Columbus, at least each of us can hover in spirit over that island of discovery and, in our hearts, sing a thankful *Salve Regina* . . . not so much for our past, but for our future.

Many of us travel in our arm-chairs . . . without ever leaving home. But more and more of us, after hearing of some neighbor who has done it, get up the courage to send a deposit into some agency and really make up our minds to go. Then the weeks speed by, we worry about what to pack, and off we find ourselves on some classical tour to classical places.

And when all is said and done, we find that we haven't left our arm-chairs after all. We sit in one on a plane, we lounge in a variety of them on a ship, we sit in one on a train or coach. Mostly, while we travel today, we sit.

A trip to the Bahamas . . . and especially to San Salvador . . . at least the way those nine travelers from Spain made it, is a little different.

Oddly, one of the sponsors of the Martha Dean program is Cunard Steamship Company, and Miss Dean had to excuse herself during the interview with Robert Marx (only American who had sailed on the *Niña*) to talk about the *Queen Mary*. And where was the great *Queen Mary* bound?

## Comfort on Queen Mary

Where else? She was making winter trips to the sunny Bahamas (which include San Salvador) round trip, almost a full week, for less than \$300 (from New York and back). We're not paid anything for telling you so, but whether paid or not, it's up to us to serve you with good travel information. And for us . . . older folk at least . . . let's face it: The *Queen Mary* is more suitable than the *Niña*.

Let's get up and GO! Or fly!