



# "Dignity Restored"

*A newsletter about the Missions from Fr. Martin Chambers*

## Welcome



Well, a lot has happened since I last wrote to you in July. I have ended my five-year missionary work in Nueva Prosperina and am now firmly at home in my new Parish of St. Matthew's in Kilmarnock. This newsletter comes by way of bringing you up to date with how I said farewell to my beloved Guayaquil and also asking your continued help for the missionary projects that still need to be supported.

## Fond Farewell

Once the last of my Scottish visitors left, it was time, in the middle of July, to start telling my Ecuadorian parishioners that I was about to leave them. I knew it was going to be hard, but, on the weekend of the announcement, it seemed to be non-stop tears. With Adela, Freddy, Tito, Carol and a whole host of folk, we were in tears for days. After a few days though, the reality started to kick in and I realised I had to get so much together in order to hand over the school and parish. Everyone wanted to say a personal farewell and I tried to get round as many people as possible. And when it came to the final weekend, there was a party in each of the chapels, an open-air concert and march to the airport. A bit over the top, I thought, but it was very Latin and, indeed, very enjoyable. Throughout all of this time, I tried to hold myself

together, but I am not ashamed to admit that, at the airport, there were tears streaming down my face.

My successor in the parish is a local priest, Fr. Gonzalo Lopez, who is not as extrovert as yours truly, so there might be less clapping and singing at the Masses. However, early indications are that he has got everyone on board and that the parish is as active as it always was.

Of course, I had known for some time that I was leaving and yet it was hard to turn my back on my community knowing that they had and still have so many needs. Still no running water, no sewerage, no proper health care. And so I pledged that I would do all I can to keep the central projects together. This is where I ask for your continued generosity....

## School Fees

Living in the shanty town like Nueva Prosperina, you quickly realise that there is no proper education system. Yes, there is supposed to be state education, but where it exists, it struggles by with poor teachers' wages and little or no school resources. So our parish school, 'Escuela Sagrada Familia de Nazareth' was a godsend to our poor and needy families close by. It wasn't just that it was a great looking school, but the teachers had worked hard over these last years to make sure that the education standard was excellent too. Yet it wasn't free. The only way to pay the teachers was from the fees that the

kids paid monthly. Many children receive help from other sources, but Scots' generosity once again came to the fore. Scotland paid for around 100 of the 600 school children this year. It costs £10 per month to pay for a child's education. CAN YOU PAY £10 PER MONTH? So that a child in Nueva Prosperina can go to school. Remember, the only way out of poverty is education - can you help?



### *In this Issue:*

Welcome	1
Fond Farewell	1
School Fees	1
Soup Kitchen	2
Medical Centre	2
What will happen to the Charity?	2
Thank You	3
Donations	4
Internet & Newsletter	4
And finally	4





# Soup Kitchen



One of the first projects I set up while in Nueva Prosperina was the Soup Kitchen within the school campus. Initially we started in a bamboo hut, but clearly that presented safety issues cooking in a room made of bamboo! So, with Scots help, we were able to build a proper kitchen and dining hall. And each day, for the past five years, over 100 children receive a wholesome meal: home-made soup, fruit juice and a plate of rice and chicken or beans. Whenever I went down to the Soup Kitchen, I knew I was going to get a great meal, as well as a good chat with the pupils.

You can help... it costs £5 per month to feed a child in the Soup Kitchen.  
**CAN YOU SPARE THAT CASH?**



## Medical Centre

The last time I wrote, I said that we had shelved the idea of the Medical Centre because of lack of funds. However, like so many occasions over these last years, there were some last minute donations. A charity called '2 Hands' came up trumps with some special funding for a Medical Centre which, added to extra donations from Scotland, came to the amount that was needed for the new build. So we can, at the very least, start the building. Well, not quite yet - Ecuadorian paperwork means that we have to wait a while until we establish who actually owns the land where it will be built.



And then, when it is actually built, donations will be needed to help provide the equipment to provide treatment and care for the weakest and most vulnerable within the shanty area. **CAN YOU HELP FUND THE EQUIPMENT NEEDED?**



## Spotlight on the last visitor... Christine Hand

**Christine Hand**



When we arrived in the shanty town of Nueva Prosperina in June this year, my senses of sight, sound and smell were experiencing things as never before. I had never seen so many small 'houses' in the one area, so much rubbish lying on the streets and the dusty roads weren't very 'car friendly'! The noise during my three week stay was constant. The smell while walking through the community took a bit of getting used to!

Despite the poverty I saw before my eyes, I witnessed the happiest people I had ever met. The community was full of life. I met lots of new friends that I will never forget. All the people of Nueva Prosperina were so generous. Every day they welcomed us into their tiny homes and gave us their food, which may have been all they had for dinner that night. They all insisted that we thanked everyone in Scotland for everything they have done for them. It was great to see for ourselves all the things which Fr. Martin had told us about. Tito, one of the special friends we met, told us that, because of this help from Scotland, their dignity had been restored.

## What will happen to the Charity now?

I am sure you realise from all that I have said there is still a great need for help in Nueva Prosperina. When I met with the Charity Trustees in August, there was total agreement that we should continue to ask for help for the three key priorities:

- School Fees
- Soup Kitchen
- Medical Centre Equipment

So, we are asking as many folk as possible to continue raising much needed cash.

Why not organise a fundraising event or make a personal donation?

Now that I am home for good, you are asked to send your donations to me at my new address:

**St. Matthew's Church  
Grassyards Road  
New Farm Loch  
KILMARNOCK  
KA3 7SH**

Cheques should be made payable to:

**"The Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust"**



# Talk on a "Life on the Missions"

One of the funniest lines I heard while out on the Missions came from my good friend, Fr. Colin MacInnes, who has done great work over 25 years on the Ecuadorian Missions. Whenever talking about me, he would say "*The only way to have a conversation with Chambers is to interrupt him!*" Well, here is an offer.... I am willing to come out to give a talk about what it was like to live on the Missions or even just to encourage people in their fund-raising efforts. You can make arrangements by getting in touch by e-mail [mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk) or by phone at St. Matthew's Church, telephone 01563 533587.

# Edinburgh Marathon 2010

This takes place on Sunday 23 May 2010 and I will be running to raise funds for the Ecuadorian Mission. If anyone wants to join me and help raise much needed funds, you can make arrangements by getting in touch by email or telephone as above.

# "Change for Ecuador"

This was the name of a simple but effective way of raising funds for our projects in Ecuador. It was the project of Our Lady and St. Meddan's Parish, Troon. They put a box at the back of Church and invited people to put in their spare coins. In that way, they raised quite a bit of cash. It led me to think why not ask more people to simply collect their spare coins, either at work or at home and send the donation for Ecuador.

# Thank You

As I look back over the five years, I am grateful for all that was achieved. But I am also very aware that while I was spending the charity money on the projects of Nueva Prosperina, you had all raised the great amounts of cash. You are the real heroes and you deserve a sincere word of thanks. Enhorabuena!

# Newsletter

If you know of anyone who would wish to receive a copy of the newsletter, please let me know.

Fr. Martin Chambers  
St. Matthew's Church  
Grassyards Road  
New Farm Loch  
KILMARNOCK  
KA3 7SH

# Internet

Although I have stopped posting a blog about the Missions, I do hope to get a renewed website up and running shortly. I shall keep you posted. Meanwhile, you can contact me by e-mail at:

[mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk)

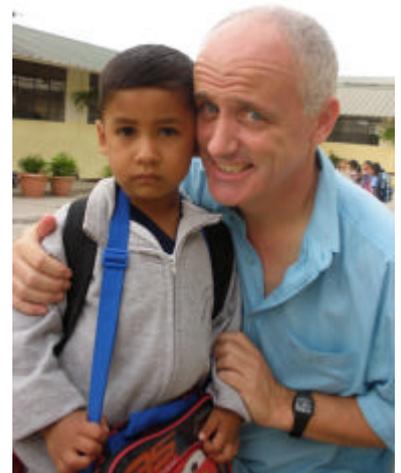
# Donations

If you wish to make a donation, please make cheques payable to the "Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust" and send them to my new address.

# And Finally...

Some sad news. Amidst the tearful farewells of August, I was especially saddened to say goodbye to my neighbours, Jamie and Olga. I always considered them to be my Ecuadorian parents as they had the exact ages of my own Mum and Dad. Olga cried and asked (out loud) who was going to help her now. Who was going to provide for Jaime's medicines? Who was going to give them the food they could not afford?

I did not have a good answer and did not want to give them false hope. So we said farewell with great sadness and that sadness was made even greater when, after just a week at home, I got a mail to say that Jaime had died. After all his health worries over the last five years, his pain has come to an end. And yet I reflected so many thousands of people in Nueva Prosperina needing so much help. Jamie has gone, but the struggle goes on.



# REAL CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Sponsor a child's school fee for a month or a year



Feed a child for a month or a year.



Donation for medical equipment.



Sponsor a child's school fee:

For a month £10

For a year £100

Feed a child:

For a month £5

For a year £50

Equipment for the Medical Centre:

£250

Cheques made payable to the Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust

My e-mail address: [Mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk)

Martin Chambers  
St. Matthew's Church  
Grassyards Road  
New Farm Loch  
KILMARNOCK  
KA3 7SH

Hope you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas!

