



"Dignity Restored"

A newsletter about the Missions from Fr. Martin Chambers



Welcome



There is hardly a week goes by without some sort of communication with Ecuador and our people in the shanty town of Nueva Prosperina in Guayaquil. It could be a phone call or an e-mail but they are always telling me how things are going for them. So this Newsletter comes by way of bringing you up to date with how things are going. It is also a call to help with fundraising the various projects, in particular paying the school fees of the poorest children and also feeding them at our Soup Kitchen.

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Edinburgh Marathon 2010

My cousin, Graeme, asked me way back in October to run this Marathon with him. I was a bit unsure whether I could do it since I am not an experienced runner. However, with the advice of several friends I have been following a training schedule, going out 2 or 3 times a week. So far I am up to running around two hours, but I know that I will have to run at least double that to complete the race. The actual Marathon takes place on Sunday, 23 May in Edinburgh and I will be

running to raise funds for the Ecuador Mission. I have included a sponsor form with this newsletter and hope that you can get as many sponsors as possible. I **need your help in getting as many sponsors as possible**. Please take this form and fill it in at work, amongst your friends. Or to make a donation or sponsor you can get in touch by e-mail: mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk or by telephone me on 01563 5333597 (St. Matthew's Church).

The "2 Hands" Charity

Several years ago, while still on the Missions, I received a mail from a lady in England called Dianne Kidd. She said that she was setting up a charity to help fund Church and school projects in Ecuador. Would I be interested, they asked? Since making contact with them, they have done an amazing amount of sponsorship or our Nueva Prosperina projects: they funded much of the school building, and have now raise the money needed to build the Medical Centre. I was always astounded at their generosity. I was glad to use my Christmas break to travel down to Telford in Shropshire to say thanks for all that they have

done for the poor people of Ecuador.

While down there, I celebrated Mass with many local people and visited Burton Borough School, which has done so much to help our projects.

There is more from the "2 Hands Charity" on the back page.

To our friends at the "2 Hands" charity, we say: **Muchas Gracias**.





Medical Centre

Many thanks to so many people, including the '2 Hands' charity. We are on the threshold of starting the building of the Medical Centre. The present Medical Centre, which runs out of a classroom at the school runs more like a First Aid Centre, however, with the proposed larger complex up beside the Parish Church, there will be facilities for First Aid, Dentistry, Psychological Services and much more. The only drawback in the whole process is the delays in securing our rights to build on the land. In my early days in Nueva Prosperina, it was possible to start building without the necessary permissions from the City Council, but now that the City Officials are regulating what goes on in the area, we have to wait until Building Control have given approval for the site. According to my friends in the housing charity, that permission should be granted within the next weeks. So, I am keeping my fingers crossed! Of course, once the Centre is built, we will need funds to equip it and run it on a daily basis.



What's Happening at the School?

During the months of February and March, our school of the Holy Family is on its annual long holiday. Most of the teachers are on in-service training. And in the school building itself we are running a type of summer school to help pupils in Maths and literature. From the 15 March parents have to come and sign up their children for the new school year, which begins on 5 April.

This year, we will have children from kinder school through primary education and into secondary school. In fact, this year, for the first time, we will have 6 year of secondary school. Especially for those in the top year of secondary school, this is an important step on their journey of human formation - they all know that the only way out of poverty is through education.

As you know, our school serves the people of Nueva Prosperina who are extremely poor. Since most families in our area have 3 or 4 children, paying for your children's

education becomes very complicated, since there is very little state education. In our area, there are only 2 small state schools to cater for over 7,000 pupils. That is why people rely so heavily on schools like our own, where parents have to pay school fees. The boys and girls and young adults who study at the Holy Family are very happy here for they feel protected, they study well, they enjoy themselves and they count their teachers as their friends.

Apart from the study side of things, we also run a Soup Kitchen. The object here is to provide a nutritious lunch to around 120 children whose parents are out until late at night looking for work.

We hope to start the new school year with around 600 children and young adults. More than half of them receive 'grants', which allow them to study; some of these grants come from our generous friends in Scotland. We thank God each day along with the children for the generosity of our Scottish friends who make this all possible.

*Written by Freddy Pincay
(Depute Head Teacher)*



Talk on a "Life on the Missions"

One of the things that has kept me busy over the months that I have been settling back into life in Scotland has been the regular talks I have been asked to give on the Missions. I have been at Schools, Parishes and other groups where the people have been very keen to hear about Ecuador. They have also been very generous in supporting the Missions. If you want me to come and give your group a talk on the Missions, don't be afraid to get in touch by email:

mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk or by calling me on 01563 5333587.

Spotlight on... Brittany Michelle



Here is a short letter from Brittany, who will be starting top year of primary school...

My name is Brittany Michelle and I am 11 years old. My family has lived in Nueva Prosperina from before I was born. I have a sister called Nicole and my favourite colour is sky blue. I love to study and my favourite subject is English. One day I hope to grow up to be a Doctor.

I go the Holy Family School and I am in Primary 7. I am also getting ready to make my Confirmation this year. When I don't have a lot of homework, I help my Mum to clean

up at home and wash the dishes. I am also learning to cook. I love to draw, dance, watch TV and play with my cousins.

My birthday is 20 November.

My school is very nice, the nicest in the whole area. Other schools have bamboo classrooms, but our friends in Scotland helped us to build a big school with brick classrooms. There are many people who help me at school. My favourite teacher is Miss Azucena, she is like a Mum to me. Our new Priest, Padre Gonzalo, is very good.

We always remember our friends from Scotland who helped us so much. You are very good. **Hugs to all!**



Are Donations still coming in?

I was always aware that once I was home for good, there was the possibility of less donations coming in for the charity. However, I have been pleasantly surprised that many donations (perhaps less than before) are still coming on a regular basis. These really do help the people of Nueva Prosperina. So, to make sure that we are able to continue paying for the poor people's school and running the Soup Kitchen, we need your financial help.

Please send your donations to me at my new address:

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

Cheques should be made payable to the "Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust".

'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 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 to Ecuador.



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, Grassyard Road
New Farm Loch, KILMARNOCK, KA3 7SH





And finally...

New Website

With the help of Sharon McNamara from St. Matthew's Parish, I have set up a new website for the charity. I hope you like it. I will be doing a regular blog as well as putting on various pictures and stories about the Missions in Ecuador. Take a look at the new website:

www.ecuadortrust.org.uk

Cheques made payable to the Martin Chamber Ecuador Trust

My e-mail address: Mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk

Martin Chambers
St. Matthew's Church
Grassyard Road
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KILMARNOCK



Some happy news.... Quite often I am going about my daily business in St. Matthew's when my mobile rings. If it gives the code 593 then I know it is from Ecuador and I stop what I am doing to take the call. Normally it is from one of the teachers - Adela, Freddy, Tito - but from time to time there will be a surprise voice on the other end of the phone. Two weeks ago I took a call from Olga, who as you remember, lost her husband Jaime a couple of weeks after I left Guayaquil. She was in very good form and wonders when more Scots will visit. She was very happy to hear all the news. Another phone call was from Flor Napa whose husband, Luis, was rendered paraplegic and lost all his family fortune, although there wasn't really much to lose. I was astounded to hear her voice as I knew that she would have had to walk over four miles just to get a phone card. Everything was fine: Luis, although in pain, is happy with his family around; the children are enjoying their long holiday, and Esmirna, the daughter, is going to school for the first time March.

It cheers me up no end to hear an Ecuadorian voice on the other end of the phone as it spurs me on to work on behalf of these very poor friends of ours.

More from "2 Hands"

"2 Hands" is a relatively new and small UK charity who raise funds to help support desperately poor communities across the developing world. We specifically support projects which help improve education, health care and job opportunity. As we don't have our own charity workers abroad, we seek out local organisations already working in the country, and work with them through a trustful relationship.

We wanted our first project to be Ecuador and through various connections, found Fr Martin (the internet makes the world a small place) who turned out to be the right person to work with. It was a joy to meet and see him at work when we spent a short while with him in his parish in Ecuador. Being a small charity it is very important that we can show our contributors exactly how their donations are being spent and this visibility has greatly contributed to the success of our fundraising efforts to date. I take personal pride in that approach. For example, we were able to engage people in the UK with the development of the new school block, showing pictures and slide shows of its progress, completion and inauguration, and were more than happy to donate £41,000 for this project.

Another dimension to "2 Hands" is that a significant part of our fund raising effort is provided by UK School Children - the idea being that a school 'votes' on selecting a project to raise funds for. Not only does this give the children some perspective and a sense of responsibility, but it also gives them the opportunity to help children just like themselves from elsewhere in the world who are much less fortunate. In addition they learn real life skills which are transferable to their own lives, e.g. budgeting, team working, communicating with others, etc. We have been working with a few schools over the last two years and in particular with The Burton Borough School in Newport, Shropshire. They have raised the magnificent sum of £15,000 specifically for Fr Martin's Medical Centre Project in Nueva Prosperina, which is a great contribution to our total donation of £24,000 so far to this project. So, as before, we are all eagerly looking forward to seeing the pictures of the building being started, completed and used 'day to day'.

Dianne Kidd
Founder and Chair
"2 Hands"

