



# Restoring Dignity

SC037458

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

## Bienvenidos

Welcome to the lent newsletter, which keeps you up to date with everything that has been going on lately in the Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust charity. Since our last edition in the summer there has been a lot of activity in our Nueva Prosperina community, especially in the school. Escuela Sagrada Familia continues to support children not only in their education and in the daily soup kitchen, but also through the wider community programmes.

This newsletter also contains other stories: of the Trust's friend, Jose Luis who was recently ordained as a Deacon in Guayaquil Cathedral; and of a community near Guayaquil city which experiences flooding yearly.

I hope by reading this newsletter you will be encouraged to continue to think about the needy of our world and stretch out a helping hand.



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## Update on Sagrada Familia School

One of the disappointments of not being able to travel to Ecuador with the pupils from St. Joseph's Academy in October meant that we were unable to see at first hand the changes that have taken place recently in Sagrada Familia School. The most striking change has been the building of the covered patio in the main school playground. This provides shelter for the children during their open-air PE classes and also during the school breaks. For anyone who has experienced the searing heat of the Guayaquil sun (the temperature rarely falls below thirty degrees) you realise that this covered patio is a welcome addition.

*"Dear Scottish Friends,*

*I am happy to send these Christmas greetings to you in thanks for all you have given to Sagrada Familia School. I knew of the work of this long before I met my wife, Adela. Here it is not just subjects that are taught but rather values for life - this is invaluable to the young people who come from extremely poor backgrounds and who look to this school for a way forward in life. Your Trust has given so much to our community - each of the 25 classrooms as well as the church and soup kitchen were built through your generosity. When we needed to build a covered patio this year, we decided to try and raise funds ourselves so as not to burden our Scottish friends too much. It was hard work getting the cash together, but we managed. Now we have a patio area where the children can play and work. This school truly is an example of that well-used phrase "ECUADOR Y ESCOCIA AMIGOS POR SIEMPRE - Ecuador and Scotland, Friends Forever!"*

Although it was not cheap to put up, the funds were secured by the school itself by raising funds through local bingos and raffles. For the Ecuador Trust this is a significant moment because it means that it is the first infrastructure project that has taken place funded only by the local community. Washington Garcia is the husband of the Head Teacher, Adela Villacres, and is also the architect who oversaw the patio project. He recently sent us a thank you letter:





# Jesus Divino Chambero



One of the community projects that has taken off in recent months is through a local church group called "Jesus Divino Chambero." It was set up years ago by a Guayaquil Jesuit priest, Padre Ignacio Moretta, who worked with impoverished young children who were to be found on Guayaquil's rubbish tips looking for food, clothes and shelter. He would work with young people finding them and their families jobs and decent places to stay. Padre Moretta found his way to Nueva Prosperina and to our community where he helped children into education and worked with Scottish donors to provide basic bamboo houses for many families.

Even although Padre Moretta died some years ago, the "Divino Chambero" charity still exists and recently they made a new connection with Sagrada Familia School. Gloria and Celina would be well-known to many Scottish visitors as they ran Catechism

classes in some of the local chapels, but now they have come to the school as volunteers. In the primary school they run English classes, RE classes and prepare the children and their parents for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. In the secondary school they run health education classes and as the pupils start to plan for their future, they lead guidance classes. In all of this the motivation of the "Divino Chambero" group is clear - to be modern-day disciples amongst the poorest and weakest. We know that they are producing good fruits as they help the young people of Sagrada Familia school work their way out of poverty through education.



# Soup Kitchen



2016 will mark the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the running of the daily soup kitchen at Sagrada Familia. Since it began, the purpose has not changed: to feed 120 children who otherwise would go hungry because their parents are out working or looking for work or, in some cases because their parents have left them to find a new life elsewhere. At the moment one of the families which is fed at the soup kitchen is the Escobar Alvear family. The three daughters: Emmy, Marita and Genesis are fed each day with a healthy meal which consists of a bowl of home-made soup, a plate of rice and beans and a cup of fruit juice. Emmy, who is in her final year at the secondary school said: *"From the bottom of my heart, I say thanks to all our Scottish friends who support us in the soup kitchen. Our Mum and Dad often have no work and have little money to spend on us; even when they have work they are out till late at night. So the food that the school's soup kitchen gives us really*

*does help us. Please know two things: the Esobar Alvear family is truly thankful for your generosity and it has helped me to get on with my studies. I am looking forward to going to college once I finish school. If my family hadn't been able to afford to send me to school, I would not have the opportunity of a better future. Gracias, Esocia!"*

The money needed to run this comes entirely from your donations.



**It costs £10 per month to feed a child in the soup kitchen.  
CAN YOU HELP FEED A CHILD IN 2016?**

# New Project in Ecuador

While the UK has been battered with stormy weather in recent weeks and many houses and businesses have been flooded, we know that such severe weather is not unique. In other parts of the world there are similar floods, sometimes worse. In Guayaquil the rainy season starts in December and runs through until April. During that time it does not rain "all-day-every-day" but there are normally two torrential thunderstorms each day: one in the early morning and another in the early evening. In the shanty towns like Nueva Prosperina people are always worried that their homes will be washed away or that the little property that they have will be ruined.

A friend of the Ecuador Trust - Fr. Dennis O'Brien lives in the Duran district of Guayaquil which is shanty town similar to Nueva Prosperina where there is poor sanitation, no sewerage and little access to health care and education. The major difference for Fr. Dennis is that his entire parish is low-lying and will generally be flooded from December through until April. He describes below what life is like during this rainy season...

*"The rains have prevented me from celebrating Mass at a small parish, San Bernabe, in an invasion (shantytown) called Una Sola Fuerza. The houses are bamboo on stilts. The streets are dirt and there is no drainage. The people do not have indoor plumbing. Last Wednesday, I drove to San Bernabe for Mass and I only saw water and no land. I could not call them puddles. They were more like pools.*

*The collection for the church of San Bernabe this past Sunday was a whopping 6 euros! Fifty yards away is a foundation called Pura Corazon (Pure Heart). They provide lunch for 115 Children - Monday to Thursday. Since they didn't have funds to provide lunch for Friday, they approached me for help. They are asking for 70 euros every Friday to feed 115 children (less than 40 cents a meal). I'm looking forward for donations to cover the cost for Friday.*

*We also have a programme to help 30 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year pupils with additional classes after school. All of them get a physical examination and if there are symptoms of parasites, anemia or malnutrition, we pay for the examination and medical treatment. A nutritious snack is given to each child.*

*If the Ecuador Trust could help we would appreciate donations to defray the cost of the meal for 115 children on Fridays and to defray the cost of paying for the medical examinations, medicines and nutritious snacks for the children in the additional class programme.*



## Cycling for Ecuador

Since the last edition, Joe Sikora, Peter Diamond and Martin Chambers have completed a gruelling cycle from Belfast to Dublin in aid of the Ecuador Trust. The 120 mile trip (undertaken in 24 hours!) was made even more gruelling due to the extreme winds that faced us. Although August normally brings some calm and settled weather, the severe winds we experienced in that month for the cycle meant that our journey was made longer by several hours. Having said that... the journey was made easier by the presence, in a back-up care of Jose's wife - Ann. She reflected recently on the trip: *"I stopped by the side of the road after every ten miles or so and I could see that the team were really struggling. It would have made more sense if we had travelled with the wind at our back, going the other way from Dublin to Belfast. However, I think it was the lure of a pint of the black stuff once they got to the Guinness Brewery that kept them going. Good on them for completing the cycle against the weather."*

The trip was made worthwhile due to the great generosity of family and friends who supported Joe, Peter and Martin; together they raised just under £6,000 for the Ecuador Trust. Joe reflected on the cycle:

*"As always the cycle threw up some very interesting moments and chance meetings. Top of the list must go to meeting Helen and John Davila outside the Guinness Factory gates at the end of our journey. John and Helen, who now live in Quito, Ecuador, but who were born and grew up in Scotland spotted Martin's Ecuador cycling top and stopped to say hello. Small world!"*

So what's next for the intrepid cyclists? Next summer the team intend to cycle around the Diocese of Galloway where Martin works as a priest. The route will take them through all parts of Ayrshire as well as around Dumfries and Galloway region. It promises to be a beautiful cycle - the hills and the coast line - and will be centred around St. Ninian's Cave at Whithorn. If anyone is interested in sponsoring the team look out for the details appearing on the Ecuador Trust webpage.





Cheques made payable to the Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust

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**Donations**

Please send your donations to me at:

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

If you want someone from the Charity to come and give your group a talk on the Missions, don't be afraid to get in touch by e-mail:

[mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk)  
or by phone at St. Matthew's Church on 01563 533587.



Charity Registration No: SCO37458

**Newsletter**

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

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**Charity Website:**

Why not visit: <http://www.ecuadortrust.org.uk> where you will find photos and many articles about the charity.

We have a link to facebook :

<http://facebook.com/#!/EcuadorTrust2>

# Jose Luis becomes a Deacon

2015 was a very significant year for one of the Ecuador Trust's friends. Jose Luis Velez Lopez, a seminarian at Guayaquil's seminary, who was an altar server at Pope Francis' Mass in the centre of the city. And then on 21<sup>st</sup> November he was ordained Deacon - the final formal step on the route to becoming a priest in the city's Cathedral. It seems only a short time ago that a young 20 year old left his bamboo home in Nueva Prosperina and nervously entered the Archdiocesan seminary. Martin Chambers recalls:

*"I remember visiting Jose Luis quite a lot in the run-up to him going to the seminary. I recall in particular how his house was totally flooded with the rains that fell that year. His Mum and Dad, along with his two brothers, quickly had to get all their possessions together to save them. Just a few weeks after that event, Jose Luis entered seminary. He has never forgotten his roots and always says he wants to work hard as a priest for the neediest communities because he hails from one himself. I wish him all the best."*

Jose Luis has one more year to study and then he will be back at Guayaquil's Cathedral for his Ordination as a priest this coming November.



# Lent



Ash Wednesday this year falls on 10<sup>th</sup> February. It is the beginning of 40 days of renewal where a lot of energy is given to charity and almsgiving. Why not think of "something for Lent" and help raise some cash for our projects in Ecuador?

## And Finally...

After the success of the CHARITY DANCE two years ago at Celtic Park, the Ecuador Trust is organising a second dance. This will take place the Kerrydale Suite at Celtic Park on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016 from 7pm. There will be music to dance to from a top quality band, hot food to eat and raffles with stunning prizes to take part in. Tables for 10 people are being sold at £250 (£25 per person). Please book your table at [mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk)

