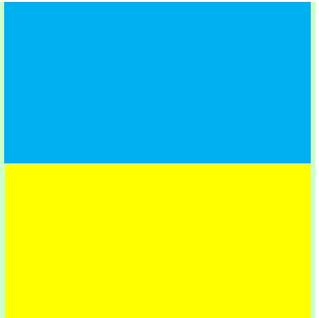




Restoring Dignity

SC037458



A newsletter about the Missions from Fr. Martin Chambers

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Bienvenidos

Welcome to this Easter 2022 Newsletter, which keeps you up to date with everything that has been going on lately in the Martin Chambers Ecuador Trust Charity.

Without doubt, we live in troubled times because of Covid and because of wars and violence. We pray for peace throughout the world... long-lasting peace. The images of families fleeing war and violence in Ukraine this year has reminded us that many families live without the basic necessities of life.

This reminds us of our friends in Ecuador who also live without the basic necessities of life.

As we celebrate the Feast of Easter - a time of new hope - let us pray that our friends in Ecuador and people throughout our world will feel hope rising in their hearts as we reach out to them.



Message from Parish Priest

The following message was received from Fr. Luis Palacios, the Parish Priest of Nueva Prosperina Parish:

"I am Luis Palacios, priest from the Archdiocese of Guayaquil. I have been the Parish Priest of "Preciosissima Sangre de Jesucristo" Church and the chaplain of "Sagrada Familia" School for the past 18 months.

The place where I live is Nueva Prosperina. It's a neighbourhood that has many socio-economic issues: poverty, robbery, drugs, broken homes, etc. Because of this, the work done at both the school and the church is very important in order to help our young people avoid any vices that may destroy their lives.

My experience in these past months has been wonderful. The people who surround me have a very good heart and they are always willing to work and help those in need. We know that we cannot drop our guard if we want Christ to rule in all of our hearts and in our community.

Nevertheless, there has been no shortage of sadness. Due to the pandemic almost half of the students have stopped coming to school. Many of our students did not have the internet service which would have allowed them to connect to school for virtual classes. Some others could not afford the school fees because their parents lost their jobs during the pandemic.

However, we carry on with a lot of enthusiasm and hope. We know we are not going to be defeated by the adversities. And we are deeply grateful for the enormous help we get from you, our Scottish friends. We count on your prayers."





Prison Riots in Guayaquil

There was some shocking news from Ecuador in the autumn of last year. Mass prison riots in Guayaquil's main jail - the Litoral Penitentiary - resulted in many people losing their lives and caused great panic in the area around the jail, which is only 7 miles from Nueva Prosperina. The overcrowded jails of Ecuador have been infiltrated over many years by drug gangs, some of which come from other South American countries. As a result of one of the drug barons being killed in December 2020, there was an outbreak of riots in September 2021 and then again in November 2021.

186 people lost their lives in the riots. The local police found it impossible to control the violence and it was only when Guillermo Lasso, the President of Ecuador, declared a 'state of emergency' that the riots were brought under control and peace was restored.

This outbreak of violence caused great distress amongst the communities which we serve. For many weeks, there were extra police patrols throughout Nueva Prosperina and its surrounding areas. Thankfully, the government, local community groups and the police have brought back calm to the troubled area and to our dear friends.



School Project - Dr. Luis Arzube School



For the last couple of years, the Ecuador Trust has been supporting a second school community close by Nueva Prosperina. The school is called 'Dr. Luis Arzube' and was established by Fr. Tom Oates, a Boston priest. At the moment, it is run by Sister Flor who sent us this message to give an update about what is happening at the school:

Our school was created on 2nd May 2009 by Archbishop Arregui of Guayaquil and Fr. Tom Oates, our beloved founder Parish Priest. At the beginning we only had three teachers and we started with only a primary one, primary two and primary three class. Over the years we have grown and, just before the pandemic, we had primary one to primary seven classes with around 400 pupils.

The motivation to establish the school was because of the great poverty in the area where we live and where the families are desperate to help their children grow in life and in the faith.

The local Church of the Archdiocese helped us to build each of the classrooms but the parents have got themselves together over the years with various fundraising activities to make sure that the classrooms are kept in good condition and suitable for the children's education.

Because of Covid, we faced new challenges. Some families in our area do not have a reliable electricity supply and others cannot afford a computer/laptop. This has meant that our school roll has fallen by half and we have had to lay off several of our teachers.

However, we would like to thank our friends in the Ecuador Trust for supporting us through these difficult times. We keep you always in our prayers of thanksgiving. Gracious, muchas gracias!



Hot Meals in Guayaquil

During the pandemic, Sagrada Familia school and Dr. Luis Arzube school were unable to run their usual Soup Kitchens. However, both schools were in fact able to feed the hungry with funds from the Ecuador Trust. As Adela Villacres, the Head Teacher at Sagrada Familia explains:

"Because the school was closed, we could not run our usual Soup Kitchen but we used the money sent from Scotland to feed the needy families of our area. Three times a week we were able to give out the following to 100 needy people: home-made soup, a meal of rice with chicken/vegetable and a cup of home-made juice. As a school, we want to say a sincere word of thanks to all our Scottish friends who helped us in this way. God bless you all!"



School Project - Sagrada Familia School



Sagrada Familia School exists in the heart of the Nueva Prosperina community where families continue to live in great poverty. In that area, many people still do not have access to daily food or to much-needed health care. Sagrada Familia School, therefore, becomes an oasis where families can send their children supported by the Ecuador Trust. In the school, they receive an education that will give the pupils qualifications that will help them to succeed in life.

Although the school roll is normally around 500 pupils (for primary and secondary education), in the last two Covid years, it has dropped to around 300 online pupils. Yet, even in these strange times, the school has been able to give their pupils real hope and true confidence in themselves and in their future.

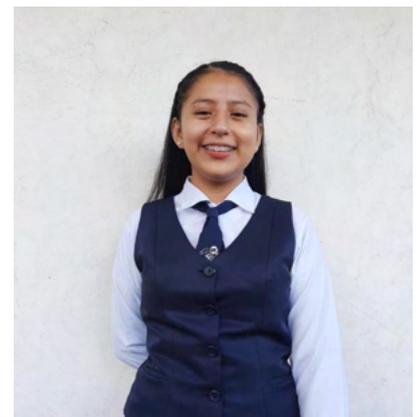
We have been sent the following messages from two secondary pupils:

- **Axel Ramirez:** *I want to say a word of thanks to Sagrada Familia School and to the Ecuador Trust who have helped me over the last few years. I know that the teachers have shown me great patience and dedication. They have helped me get grades I need for life. They have also helped me to improve and become a better person. Sagrada Familia has become my second family and I am very grateful for all the love I receive.*



- **Dayanna Figueroa:**

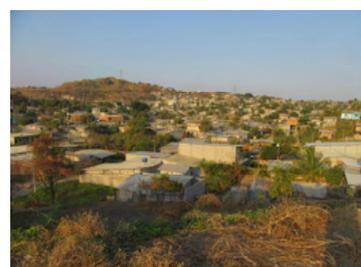
The teaching that I have been given at Sagrada Familia is beyond compare. I am very thankful for all the love you have shown me. You have supported me and encouraged me in all my school work. Even in these last two years when we have only had 'virtual' classes, you are like the face of God shining down on me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart!



Food Parcels in Portoviejo

In April 2016, there was a massive earthquake that shook the area around the city of Portoviejo to the north of Ecuador. Many families, who already lived in poverty, lost their houses and all their possessions overnight. In the six years since many people from all over the world have reached out a caring hand. The Ecuador Trust has helped too. During the pandemic, it has helped displaced families with regular food parcels. These have been gratefully received in the towns of Jama, Chirotopo and Manta from where the Parish Priest sends this message:

"I would like to thank all our friends from the Ecuador Trust who have helped our people in their hour of need. Our people were only beginning to come out of the great distress of the earthquake. In the last two years Covid has hit us hard. We have been without electricity and good clean drinking water. The food parcels you have sent to us have helped bring some light into the darkness we have seen. Many thanks - muchas gracias!"



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Donations:

Please send your donations to me at:

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Grassyards Road
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KA3 7SH

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

Once the pandemic is over, there will hopefully be more opportunity to present groups with a talk on "Life in Ecuador". Don't be afraid to get in touch by e-mail (mhartino2004@yahoo.co.uk) or by phone at St. Matthew's Church (01563 533587).



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 Registration No:
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Charity Website:

A new website has been set up for the charity. Please come and keep up to date with all that is going on for the Ecuador Trust. In particular you will now see that there is a connection to a new Facebook page for the Charity:

(<http://www.facebook.com/EcuadorTrust2/>)

where photos and articles are regularly updated.

Your Privacy

In order to send you information we hold your name and address on our mailing list.

We use this data solely for sending you this newsletter and from time to time other communications.

We never give, sell or share your data with any other organisation.

You may visit our full privacy policy on:

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

If you wish to be removed from this list please let us know and we will remove it within 30 days.

Monthly Draw

Over the years the Ecuador Trust has tried many ways to raise much-needed funds for our families in Ecuador. The most recent idea is to start a Monthly Draw online where people can sign up, support the Ecuador Trust and perhaps win a monthly prize.

The draw will be starting soon - please keep your eyes open and sign up so that you can help the families in Ecuador.



2022 Gifts for Ecuador:

Can you help with one of the following gifts to help our sisters and brothers in Ecuador? Our friends in Ecuador need your help all year round but here are two ways you can help them in 2022:

- By **PAYING THE SCHOOL FEES**: We now support the two schools of Sagrada Familia and Dr. Luis Arzube. As the schools emerge from the pandemic, classes in-person will return. Can you give the children the hope they long for and help pay their school fees?
- By **SUPPORTING THE FOODBANK**: both in Guayaquil and in Portoviejo. This has been a great help to needy families during the tragedy of the pandemic.

So, CAN YOU HELP FEED AND EDUCATE POOR FAMILIES IN 2022?

And Finally...

Before Christmas a group from St. Joseph's Academy in Kilmarnock got together and recorded a CD, a mix of religious and secular songs. Although Covid restricted their recordings, they managed to produce a 10-track CD. It was well received and raised over £755. In the midst of selling the CDs, they decided to send a copy to the Pope in Rome. And it was a source of great excitement when, on 31st January 2022, the school received the following letter from Rome:

"His Holiness Pope Francis has received your thoughtful letter and the gift of your CD. He thanks you for writing to him and sharing your project with him.

His Holiness also thanks you for remembering him in your prayers. He will pray for you and your families.

