



# friends

a publication of *The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle*



April, 2009

## THE DIOCESE OF CARABAYLLO

*Dear friends,*

In 1597 the Archbishop of Lima confirmed a young girl in a country chapel, located in a river valley to the north of the colonial capital of Lima. The world would come to know the girl as St. Rose of Lima and the bishop as St. Turibius of Mogrovejo. The road to the chapel at Quives runs through the district of Carabayllo, where five missionaries of the Society of St. James the Apostle are currently working. They are: Fr. Joe Martin, Fr. Des Tynan, Fr. Jonathan Hart, Fr. Denis Parry and Fr. Joe Plumb. It was my pleasure to make the first pastoral visit as Director of the Society to Carabayllo, on Sunday, February 15, 2009.



Farming and ranching support the majority of the people in the rural regions of the diocese.



Small simple structures, like the ones above, are home for hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers in the Diocese of Carabayllo.

Fr. Joe Martin arrived to Lima with the first missionary team in March of 1959 and has dedicated his entire priesthood to the missions. In that year the population of Lima was around one million souls. Seventy percent of the population of the country lived in the high mountain regions and in the countryside agricultural communities, leaving thirty percent in the towns and cities, mainly along the coast. The population of Lima today is approaching nine million, roughly one third of the population of the country. Ten percent of Peruvians live outside the country, primarily in Spain and Italy. A tremendous demographic shift has taken place in the last thirty years. Seventy percent of the population now lives in the cities. The district of Carabayllo is a reflection of that shift.



Fr. Joe Martin, Fr. Kevin and the liturgical ministers gather together in a moment of prayer before Mass.

With the overflow from Lima itself and the influx of people from the high country, a small town with surrounding villages dedicated to agriculture and mining now has a population of over 200,000, according to the 2005 census. The two St. James missions – the parishes of Cristo Luz del Mundo (Christ the Light of the World) and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe) labor valiantly to serve a population of some 140,000. Carabayllo has expanded out along St. Rose’s river valley road into the countryside from the original town and up the surrounding hillsides into nearly inaccessible areas, which are now called home by thousands.



This building serves as the parish office and religious education center for Cristo Luz del Mundo.

Fr. Joe Martin arrived in Carabayllo in 1990 and took up the work that other St. James men had begun a few years earlier. He was joined at Cristo Luz del Mundo Parish in 1997 by Fr. Des Tynan. The parish center has a Church, an office and religious education center, along with a simple residence. They have concentrated their efforts in training the people to take an active role in all aspects of parish life. Throughout the geographical area of the parish, there are

various chapels and community centers where the work is done. One such chapel located on a steep hillside bears the name “San José.” It was built by the people of St. Joseph Parish in Needham, Massachusetts, in honor of their pastor, the late Msgr. James J. Haddad. He had been a great friend of the missions throughout the years of his priestly ministry and his parish had sent many Youth Group volunteers to work in St. James parishes in Villa el Salvador, on the other side of Lima.



The San José chapel serves thousands who live on the steep hillsides.

An important ministry in this parish and, in fact, in most of the parishes of Peru, is a sacramental preparation program called “Catequésis Familiar (Family Catequetics).” This methodology involves the entire family in the preparation of children, ages 8 – 11 years, for their sacraments. The parents instruct their own sons and daughters after having studied the weekly theme with a group of parents under the direction of a guide couple. Each week the children of all the families gather in a central location with the parish youth. With songs, games, bible stories and crafts, the young people reinforce the lesson of the week given by the parents. This style of sacramental preparation has the effect of not only strengthening the family but of building up the entire community as well.



Fr. Kevin greets the parishioners after Mass.



Truly a group effort: Fr. Hart and the parishioners of Cristo Luz del Mundo use a bit of elbow grease to get the main church in shape.

In order to serve the people and in recognition of the rapid growth of the area, the lower section of the parish heading out of town was separated off and given over to the care of Fr. Des. There is no parish center for the organization of this community. Instead he works out of a number of chapels, which had sprung up out of devotion to the saints, such as St. Martin de Porres or Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Different confraternities had built these chapels out of their devotion. Fr. Des is working to turn these sites into the foundations for small Christian communities. A few years ago one of the newer and younger members of the Society – Fr. Jonathan Hart – joined the parish staff, bringing new energy and creativity to the pastoral effort. His efforts in the parish can be viewed online at <http://www.youtube.com/darcaraideo>.

As the population boom continued out into the countryside, a new parish needed to be formed off Cristo Luz del Mundo. In response to the request of the local bishop, Fr. Denis Parry went to take responsibility for the newly formed parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The parish encompasses an area that is both urban and rural. Fr. Denis has already built a temporary chapel, where the new community meets for liturgy and other activities. Soon enough work will begin on a parish center for worship and activities. Fr. Joe Plumb has recently joined the staff and is responsible for the rural areas of the parish. He is responsible for sixteen small villages. Each village will develop its team of local parish community leaders within the network of parish zones. This concept, as well, is very common throughout Peru.

A few years ago the Diocese of Carabayllo adopted a pastoral plan called “A New Image of the Parish.” The plan seeks to make the parish into a community of



Fr. Parry explains the construction plans for the future parish center of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe.

communities by forming small Christian communities of 100 to 150 families living in a network of zones. Each zone has a team of local leaders who organize monthly faith formation activities and social service and community development outreach. All aspects of parish life, such as sacramental preparation, are organized in the zone. Since the recent conference of Latin American bishops inaugurated a continent-wide permanent mission, all the existing pastoral plans will be conformed around a theme of “Missionary Disciples of Christ.” The hope is that all the baptized will realize that we are all called to reach out and include all people in our communities of faith.

The formation of small Christian communities goes along with the history of community mobilization in Carabayllo.



These small structures - “comedor popular” (dining hall) and a “posta médica” (medical clinic) - serve the needs of the people in a small mining village in Fr. Joe Plumb's sector.



Fr. Kevin has a chance to meet with some of the parents and children who take part in the Family Catechetics program.

The majority of the people are poor and they have had to struggle to get the basic services of water, sewage, light and paved roads as the population boomed. The Church has had to be a motivating force along with them for social progress and development along with a formation in the faith.



Fr. Des Tynan (back row, center) and Fr. Joe Plumb (back row, second from right) pose for a photo with the proud graduates of a ministry training workshop for the New Image of Parish program.

As the baptized Christians are formed within our Catholic faith communities, they become agents of a continued evangelization and a force for structural change against the violence, injustice and corruption, which assault the people.

The St. James Parishes in the Diocese of Carabayllo are a sign of hope to the poor living in one of the most densely populated dioceses in Peru. Our missionaries themselves, I believe, are a sign of the truth of St. Paul's words to the Galatians: "It is no longer I who live. It is Christ who lives in me."

May Christ Jesus continue to bless our men who work in the Diocese of Carabayllo. Let us all offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the fifty years of priestly ministry which Fr. Joe Martin has dedicated to the missions. His final mass in Peru will be celebrated on Sunday, April 26, 2009.



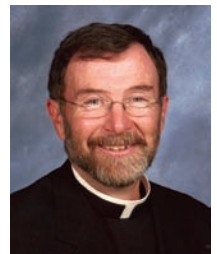
Fr. Joe Martin, right, in the Society's early days, at a Confirmation in Peru.

Please accept my best wishes for an Easter filled with joy and hope. Thank you for enabling us to do our work through your faithful generosity.

Sincerely,

*Kevin Hays*

Rev. Kevin Hays  
Director



PS - Many thanks to Fr. Joe Plumb and Fr. Jonathan Hart for their photography, along with more thanks still to Fr. Joe and to Fr. Des Tynan for contributing to the text.