



FRIENDS



The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle October 2025

Diocesan priests serving the poorest of the poor since 1958.



"Hope Does not Disappoint..."

Dear Friends,

In this issue we hear from Fr. Melchor Andaya, who recently moved from the Diocese of Chosica, in Lima, Peru to the parish of San Juan Macías , Nuevo Progreso in the Diocese of Huánuco, Peru:



Perú is known for its three types of land diversities: la Costa (the sea coast), la Sierra (the Andes cordillera mountain regions) and la Selva (the Amazonian jungle). The Diocese of Huánuco has both the Andes Region and the Selva in central part of Perú. It also comprises two provinces, namely the Province of Huánuco and the Province of San Martín.

By means of diocesan territory, sixty percent of the diocese is comprised of the Amazon region. I visited Huánuco for the first time on August 8, 2024, during the installation of Bishop Pedro Alberto Bustamante Lopez as the Local Ordinary of the Diocese. He expressed the desire to have a St. James Society priest help minister in a parish there. Less than a year later, I visited Huánuco again, and Bishop Pedro showed me some parishes that really needed help. Personally, I was taken aback when I first saw St. John Macias Parish, located in the Amazon region of Peru. I hesitated and tried to find some reason not to come here; to look for other mission destinations but the voice of the wilderness (like that of St. John the Baptist) was stronger than my excuses. I visited St. John Macías Parish again, in March 2025, and decided firmly that I would serve in this Parish. During my first weeks here, I lacked water and light in the rectory; the windows were open, uncovered and exposed to the elements. Numerous bats and doves flew around during the day and night while I prayed they would not enter the rectory through the window! However, I immediately found the locals in the community to be most welcoming. I was pleasantly surprised at how many families invited me to their homes for dinner. I was invited to dine and laugh with them for hours and they made me feel that I was not a stranger to them, but a friend. In another community, Las Palmeras, (which is 17 kms. away from the Parish) I was told, *"We have been forgotten, our last Mass here was a year ago"*. One Mass per year, in their roofless chapel along the uncemented roads, leaves thousands of families in dire need of sacramental and spiritual nurturance. It is a concrete sign that the Missionary Society of James the Apostle should be present among these communities.

There are also communities across the Huallaga River including Huánuco, which are more than 34 kms away. After hours of solitary driving on dusty roads, to Huánuco, I am greeted there by smiling faces, despite the fact that I am there to bless the tomb of a departed member of their family. I am welcomed with open arms and invited to join their community simply because I have agreed to be there, to visit them, and to spend time with them. Many elderly and youth were overjoyed and grateful to receive Holy Communion, which they had not received in a long time.





The youth also welcome me into their community and they often invite me to join them while they work in their “chacra”, the banana and cacao plantations. I am happy to join them and participate in the work with them. We cross the river again and on the other side of the river, work awaits us. We harvest fresh cacaos, collecting the seeds and filling up our pails with these seeds. The work is lighter since so many of us work together, even though we carry 80 kilos of bananas from the boat to the shore! It is necessary for me to understand the world of the working parish youth in the Amazon, in order to minister to them more effectively. Bishop Pedro Bustamante regularly asks me how I am coping in this new environment. I tell him that *“When I go back to Rome for this Jubilee Year, I will pray to the tomb of Saints Peter and Paul to intercede for me that God may grant me a renewed missionary zeal”*.



I was fortunate to go to Rome this summer for the Youth Jubilee. The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle organized a group of parish youth, with several of our priests, to go to Rome for this Jubilee celebration. Thanks to my prior experiences in Rome as a student-priest, I was in familiar territory and we were able to visit and enter the Holy Doors of the Papal Basilicas, and other important Churches within Rome. I shared some insights with our group in order to help emphasize a missionary theme. Rome is not only about tourism. Rome inculcates missionary spirit to go forth from the roads of Rome to other parts of the world including Nuevo Progreso, Perú. A particularly moving and soulful experience was when we fell in line, in the long queue of youth who prayed before the tomb of Pope Francis. All throughout the day, there was a continuous line of youth, praying before his tomb, thanking him for opening the Jubilee Doors for us; expressing their love of Latin America to a Latin American Pope. His message of hope, *“Pilgrims of Hope”* at the start of the Jubilee Year, last December 2024, is now incarnated among the presence of youth pilgrims who went to Rome.

“You are the light of the world! You are the salt of the earth!” These are the welcome words of Pope Leo XIV whom all Peruanos and all of the world love very much. Hearing these words on that evening of July 29, while witnessing thousands of youth delegates from all over the world in St. Peter’s Square, was truly a Jubilee!



The whole group was joyous as the theme song from the 1984 Rome World Youth Day, was played: “*resta qui con noi, il sole scende gia*”, or “*Stay with us O Lord, for the evening is drawing near*”. (Luke 24:29). As we entered the Holy Door of St. Peter’s Basilica, we opened our hearts to the infinite grace of God through the Church. Many of us, touched, kissed and venerated the Holy Door with silence and praying hearts. We were silent as we entered and gazed upon the beautiful statue of the Pietà of Michelangelo, on our left. La Pietà is positioned there to demonstrate to every pilgrim that Jesus with Mary, never abandon us in our suffering and death; they are always present with us. We also venerated the tomb of St. John Paul II, the Pope who convoked the first World Youth Day. We were happy to meet numerous other youth from various continents, which was an enriching experience for us. One day, after entering the Holy Door of St. John Lateran, the Pope’s Cathedral, we crossed the road to walk on the Holy Stairs, the very same stairs Jesus climbed up, to stand before Pilate and be unjustly judged. Many of our youth climbed those Holy Stairs on their knees, as a penitential experience. We also participated in an overnight vigil at Tor Vergata University, filled with more than a million participants. During the vigil, there was also a Q&A where the Pope heard questions from the youth representatives. Their questions reflected the current concerns of the youth, who long for direction and purpose in their life. The Holy Father, Pop Leo XIV, gave profound responses and powerfully connected with all of those present at the Vigil.



Now that I am back on mission here in Nuevo Progreso, the recent pilgrimage to Rome will continue to serve as my *light and salt* - to serve the people with hope. “*Hope does not disappoint*” (Romans 5:5).

~Fr. Melchor Andaya

You are heartily invited to the
St. James Society Golf Tournament
 being held at the
 Windham Country Club - Windham, NH

Wednesday - October 8, 2025
 10:30 AM Shotgun Start Call Blessed Trinity Parish
 @ 978-320-4220 for details.

With Every Good Wish in Christ,

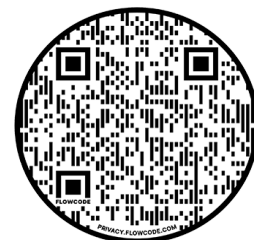
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