



FRIENDS

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

November 2023



Marketing the Spirit...

Dear Friends,

Would well-travelled tourists passing through Lima mark it off as being among the most beautiful capital cities of the world? Probably not. Some of its architecture is undoubtedly impressive but many visitors find themselves drifting away to the outlying suburbs to enjoy the sea views from areas around the large coastal road that connects the northern and southern districts. For those who like to discover the old

Diocesan priests serving the poorest of the poor in Latin America since 1958.

curiosities of a city centre, they will not go far without finding a market. Lima is full of them, ranging from the many artisan outlets selling everything Peruvian craftsmanship has to offer (alpaca sweaters, trinkets, paintings, jewellery etc.) to the smaller urban settings of districts, such as in my parish in Villa El Salvador, where the more basic needs of food, clothing, pots and pans are catered for. The “shanty town” of Villa El Salvador was built in a planned manner. However, the rapid population growth

has generated a greater demand for services resulting in a significant growth in informal commerce. Markets are vital to the local economy and trading is constant from early morning to late at night. On the Lord’s Day, business even spills out into the roads with traders blocking the flow of traffic.



You can find all kinds of street food and local flavours....anticuchos, picarones....in a friendly but competitive atmosphere. If I want to meet my parishioners, a stroll through the market nearest to my home (named “Union Progreso”) will typically bring me into contact with several of the faithful and a good few of the wandering sheep as well. Some smile in recognition, others swear blindly that they will be in the pews next Sunday! This market now boasts a 20 year history and stretches over ten thousand square metres, housing 400 stalls. We, as a Church, can learn a few lessons from the community spirit generated in the daily activity of these markets. The stall holders stick together in good times and in adversity; if one family is suffering there is a genuine concern among the others. They care about the well-being of all the traders, from the lady who has been selling her wares from the same stand for the last two decades to the latest arrival who sets out her stall with unabashed hopes of making just enough to get by on. The working life here stretches throughout the course of the day.



Those selling fruit and vegetables and others trading in perishable goods are under more pressure for a quick turnover and many folks are up at dawn every day, awaiting the first deliveries from far and wide. Amid all the noise and bustle of those offering and those haggling over prices, there is a genuine buzz about these local markets. Of course, as in any human business endeavour, they have to work at resolving disputes in a highly competitive trading environment in which many are selling similar items. Yet they know that friendships forged here will last a lifetime. In truth, whether you own one of the many stalls operating side by side offering

a haircut or manicure, or you are trying to convince customers to buy two sets of baby clothes, the stall holders have more in common and more to unite them than to divide them. Because markets are such a hub of activity, for this past year we have focused on them as an area of missionary activity; these are places where we believe Jesus wants us to make his presence felt.

With a group of mainly women, (no surprise there!), we enter the fray and gather around the image of the patron



saint of one of the markets, and pray the rosary while the frenetic world of marketeering whirls around us. Some stop and join in, others look bemused while some of the curious peek in to see what is going on! Some make the sign of the cross as they pass hurriedly by. We feel that if this is the nearest some people get to a spiritual moment in their week, then it is worthwhile to be among them. Is this not what Pope Francis has asked of us - that we be a church that celebrates the Eucharist together, and then leaves the worship space to create spiritual inroads in the surrounding culture?



Ours is a tiny effort, no more. But, as Mother Teresa once said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples." In this month of All Saints, we seek her intercession and the help of all those who urge us from celestial heights to go and make a difference, even if it is on a small scale. After all, would not those first disciples have found many of their audiences among the stall holders of their day? We send greetings to all our readers and benefactors as we unite in prayer across the seas in our mutual concern for the poorest of the poor.

~ Fr. Simon Cadwallader ~

Parish of Our Lady of Peace, Villa El Salvador



ALL SAINTS DAY PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for the example of the Saints. I desire to join in their company, worshipping you forever in Heaven. Please help me follow their footsteps, and yours, Jesus Christ. Please help me to conform myself to Your image, seeking Your will in all things, as the Saints did. Please help me to devote myself, and all that I do, to Your glory, and to the service of my neighbors.

Amen.

With Every Good Wish in Christ,

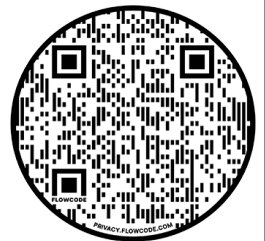
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