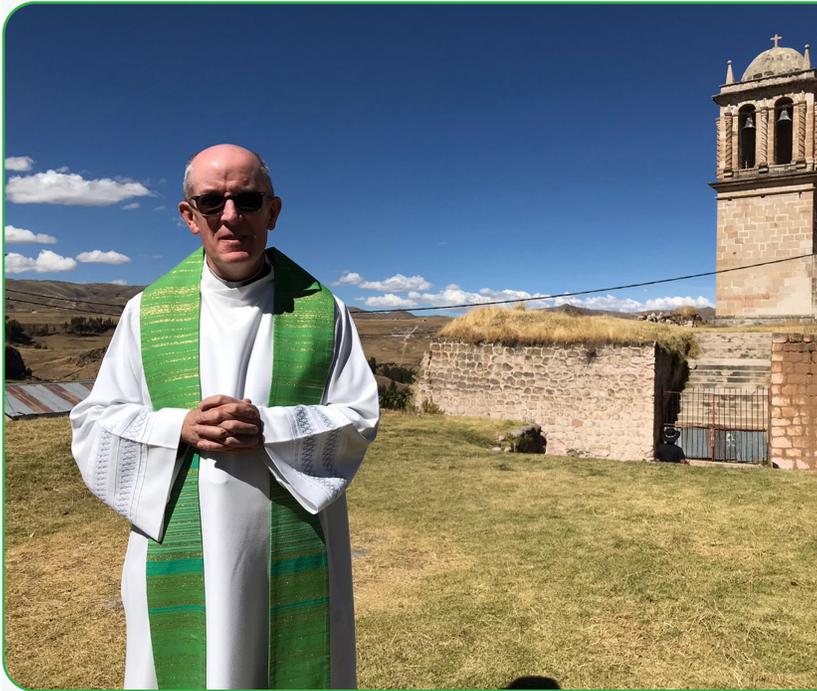




# FRIENDS

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

September 2021



## Trust in the Lord...

*Dear Friends,*

It's always a great joy for me, as Superior General of the St. James Society, to welcome new members among us, but perhaps an even greater joy to welcome former members back to active service. Fr. Joe Bibby, from the Archdiocese of Liverpool, may be familiar to many of you as he previously worked with us on mission in Bolivia. Fr. Joe arrived in Peru in June and has been assigned to the Diocese of Sicuani, high in the Southern Peruvian Andes. Fr. Joe introduces himself to us once again:

**M**y name is Joseph Bibby, and I am a priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, United Kingdom. I am the eldest of four children, my siblings being Paul, Maria, and Richard. My mother, Therese, died nine years ago, and my father Richard has just celebrated his 82nd birthday and, thank God, is strong and healthy. I grew up in a Catholic family where prayer was always important. We always attended Sunday Mass together and faith was an integral part of our daily lives. I felt called to the priesthood at the very early age

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



*Administering the sacraments during a home visit*

of 11 and was ordained at the age of 24 on the 28th of September 1985 in my home parish of SS Peter and Paul, Crosby, Liverpool.

**A**t the end of this month, I will celebrate 36 years of priesthood. As I reflect on those years of priesthood, I am so grateful to the Lord for his presence and guidance, especially through the many people He has placed alongside me, in my ministry.

My first few years of priesthood were spent working in a parish and then in Youth Ministry. However, as the Archdiocese of Liverpool had had longstanding links with the Missionary Society of St James the Apostle I had often heard the stories of life in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador from my fellow diocesan priests on their visits home; I had attended their talks, seen their photographs, listened to them, and seen the impact on their lives as priests. I began to wonder if I was being called to do the same.

So, after much prayer and discernment, I applied to join the St James' Society and travelled to Bolivia in

January 1994 to study Spanish. There followed the most wonderful six years. I began my ministry in the tropical lowlands of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and after a few months I was transferred to the Diocese of Oruro up in the Andes mountains at 4000 metres (13,000 feet) above sea level. The parish of San Andrés de Caracollo had 12 communities that we served, along with a whole team of catechists and a very active youth group. I had been told by a wise priest from home that, if I was open to the Holy Spirit, I would learn far more from the people than I would ever be able to teach them. What he said was so true!

Then, all too quickly, my six years were up. I left Latin America and returned to Liverpool at the end of 1999. But Latin America had not left me! After only four years I enquired about returning to Bolivia with



*Fr. Joe with Fr. Isaac and Bishop Pedro*



*Fr. Joe with parish Sisters*

serve in Latin America in 2021 as I had been in 1994.

International travel restrictions due to the Covid pandemic delayed my arrival in Peru to May 2021 instead of January 2021. Since June, I have been working in the parish of La Inmaculada Concepción, in Colquemarca, in the Diocese of Sicuani. It's not quite as cold or as high as Oruro, but the people are very similar and I feel very much at home. The parish has 12 communities to be served, and I am delighted to be able to get to know people. I am looking forward to many years here in Peru.

It was very important for me to have the support of family and friends, particularly from my father and siblings. before going on the Missions for a third time. I thank God for their generosity. By enabling me to live out my vocation, they are living out theirs.

And as for the future? Well, all I can do is put my trust in the Lord, in His presence, in His faithfulness, and in His mercy. Please pray for me, and for all the members of the Saint James' Society, that we will always listen to Him and be open to His voice and His inspiration, and respond to Him with generosity.

*Fr. Joseph Bibby*

the St James' Society, but this was not possible as the Society was no longer sending priests to Bolivia.

So, I took a huge risk and returned to Bolivia independently, thanks to an agreement that was made between the dioceses of Liverpool and Oruro. I served for seven more very happy years in the parish of San Ildefonso de Paria, which is the oldest parish in Bolivia having been founded in 1535. This time I had 35 communities to serve, so I was kept very busy. However, I did miss the friendship and support structures of the St James' Society.

In 2011 I returned to Liverpool once again, and spent the subsequent ten years as part of a team of priests working together in a parish with four churches and seven schools. However, even after ten years in my own country, Latin America was still beckoning me! It was during a 30-day Ignatian Retreat organised by the British Jesuits in July last year that I finally realised that I was still being called to



*Fr. Joe with parishioners*





*Fr. Joe walking the hills to celebrate Mass*

**A**s we welcome Fr. Joe among us once again, we send our gratitude to Archbishop Malcom McMahon and the Archdiocese of Liverpool for allowing Fr. Joe return to active service with the St. James Society.



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

Wednesday - October 13, 2021  
10:30 AM Shotgun Start  
Call Blessed Trinity Parish @ 978-320-4220 for details  
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