



FRIENDS

The Missionary Society of St. James
the Apostle

May 2025



"Life, Mission and Hope..."

Dear Friends,

Hope surpasses life's limitations. To hope is to see multiple possibilities with life's circumstances, while being aware of all its complexities and challenges. Jesus demonstrates this when He teaches the disciples to transcend beyond their limited experience. Jesus's approach in ministry can be imitated in missionary life. We must see that there are options God gives in the life of mission, both to the missionary and to whom the missionary is sent. Each day I am presented with opportunities to meet people and celebrate the Sacraments here in the parish of El Resucitado in Lima, Peru. Recently, in February, I was blessed to bestow the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to both a husband and wife, together, on St. Valentine's Day. While uttering the words, I realized that they had

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



been true to the love they professed before the Altar of God, committed to each other in both sickness and in health. During the same month of February, while waiting outside the chapel before Mass, a father, a factory worker, approached me and asked to have his three children baptized. On the feast of St. Blasé, a couple of weeks earlier, I met a mother whose child has a hole in his throat; she asked for prayers that the doctors would be able to help her child. These are all examples of people with faith, who hope in the Lord. I am regularly encountering the people, on the sea of the daily life of mission, where Jesus keeps asking for us missionaries to cast the nets on the other side and keep on going, keep on hoping. St. James, the patron saint of the Society, and a business partner of Simon Peter, knew very well that if we cast our nets on the other side, hoping in the words of Who commands us, we will see the miraculous catch in our life's boat.

They say that a missionary must be always “*on the go*”, literally to be on the road. This is true in mission, particularly when it is linked with the parable of the Good Samaritan. On the other side of the road is where the man was robbed and left half-dead. Mission work is to seek the other side of the road, where many are being abandoned, leaving their dreams half-dead. Mission is to walk on the side of the road where people’s energy and optimism have been robbed. Mission is to meet people on the road that is less traveled and meet those who are in dire need. It might be a simple hello or smile to our neighbors. A 91-year-old woman who lives across the street from our rectory comes to mind. She is sometimes visible from her metal grid window and my usual greeting to her is “*Abuela! Buen día!*” To this greeting she responds only with a serene and calm gaze while she stares at the Church. Our missionary work is the thoughtful recognition that we have an elderly person living just a few steps away from the Church. Another good neighbor, whose house is beside this elderly woman, is a boy with Downs Syndrome. I have yet to meet him but at every Saturday evening Mass, before the entrance procession, I nod to him, while he sits in his window. His presence, within three meters of the church, reminds me that I have neighbors who are the face of Christ, the Good neighbors,



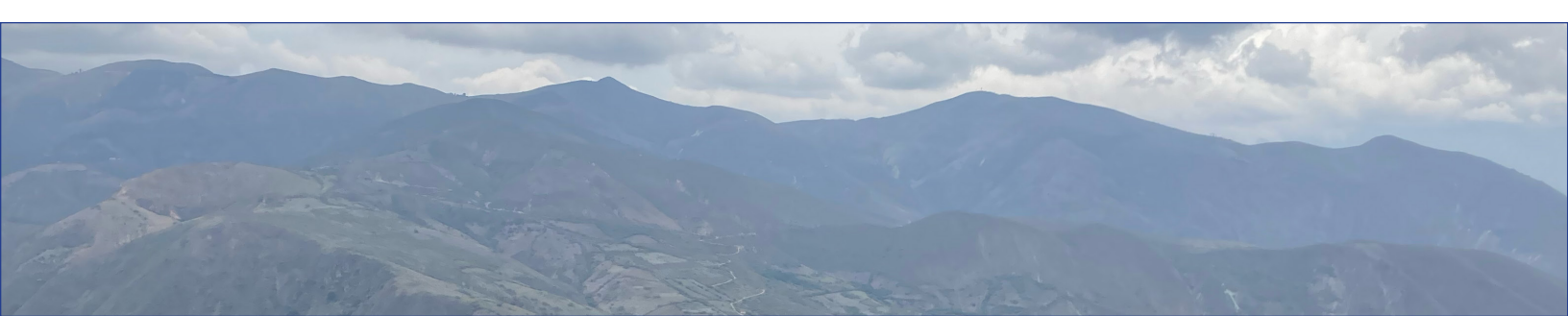
the Good Samaritans. I, too, have experienced being helped along the road here. One day, on my way back to the parish, I felt quite hungry while slowly crawling through the heavy traffic on a very hot day. At one point, I stopped beside a woman who was selling candies in the middle of traffic. She approached me. Since I only had a few coins in my pocket I just gave those coins to her while motioning that I did not need any candy. However, she looked into my eyes and with much care she told me, “*take even one of my candies, they are good candies*”. In almost an hour of sitting in traffic, the candy from that old lady was a blessing for me.



Her gift, her pride in what she sold, was priceless and helped sustain me on that particular journey. Jesus taught His disciples about bearing fruit and how this gift remains in Him while also being sent forth, *"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you."* (John 15:16). The promise of Jesus, that we will be fruitful, is a promise of hope and is now clearly visible at community of El Resucitado Parish. On February 7, 2025 the parish commemorated its foundation, its eighteen year anniversary, with Fr. David Costello, their first parish priest. Fruitfulness can be seen in this parish by the countless baptisms, first communions, confirmations and many sacramental confessions which have happened here in Ate, Lima, Perú over the years. Currently, we celebrate fifteen Masses a week in this parish. I recall a young catechist who regularly attended Mass here, who is now working in Florence, Italy. He told me that he started to pray for his future at each Mass. Now that his prayer was answered, he said he will continue to live his faith wherever he goes. He is an example of being fruitful in the faith and at the same time being sent forth. The mission will always be fruitful as long as it follows Jesus and His words. What a consolation it is to a foreign missionary, like myself, to witness the words of the Prophet here in action: *"Yet just as from the heavens, the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful"* (Isaiah 55:10).

I must admit that life's questions are the difficult ones. How do I ignite hope in people who are marginalized and stuck at the corner of life's wall? Some come up to me right after the Mass, asking difficult questions about what they should do with their life. At times like these I recall the sound advice of a saintly senior priest, a Society alumnus, who told me to take the time to listen, do not be in a hurry, but give people your time, even if it is only a few moments outside after Mass. For many youth here, the burden of boredom, living in the hills or "cerros", is very intense. One youth told me that he realized that spending more time with the other parish youth in our programs was





meaningful for his own spiritual and mental health. The young man was grateful for the youth programs. The mission among the youth of the Church is very real and there is a very current need to share and foster hope among the youth. That hope is Jesus. Only by His side and through friendships with other parish youth, will a teen's boredom regain vibrant strength. Many youth stories here have been changed from seemingly tragic to something beautiful by hopefulness. These stories of hope occur when they are open to the Divine story. Thus, if the human experience, including those challenging ones, are subjected to Jesus, they will always become hopeful stories. The reality is that the life of mission comes from God, and consequently, all the efforts of people participating on this mission will be God's. In the light of this, missionaries receive inspirations to widen the charity of mission in order to preach about God in works and sacraments, in the ordinary way of life.

One Friday evening, I held a street Mass. While waiting for the people to arrive, I was moved when I saw some people in wheelchairs approaching the Altar Table. They aligned their wheelchairs forming an improvised pew along the street. Deep in my heart, I recalled and prayed the words of the Prophet Isaiah *"Then the lame shall leap like a stag, and the mute tongue sing for joy"* (Isaiah 35:6). Then, we began the Holy Mass and they received Jesus in the Eucharist. Hope is synonymous with mission. Where there is mission, there will always be hope for all. Life, mission and hope are beautiful realities present in and among us. May God bless all of you, our benefactors. Please continue to pray for the Society of St. James and our missions! -- Fr. Melchor Andaya



With Every Good Wish in Christ,

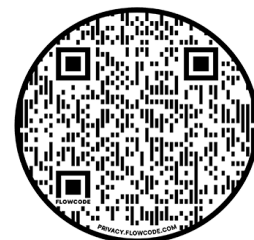
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