



FRIENDS

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

August 2021



Blessed with a Seed of Faith

Dear Friends,

When Cardinal Cushing founded the St. James Society, he mandated us to go to those places where there is no church presence, and there began the whole process of putting parish infrastructure in place, as well as building up the faith community. Sixty-three years later we continue to honor Cushing's mandate. On my recent visit to Lima, I visited with Frs. Denis Parry and Francis Kwofie at our 'Our Lady of Guadalupe' parish on the extreme north side of the city. The parish covers quite a large area and is a mix of both urban and rural terrain, with several towns developing along a fifty mile stretch of road that leads to Santa Rosa de Quives, the town where St. Rose of Lima spent her teenage years. Our Lady of Guadalupe parish is growing rapidly, so much so, that we have decided to petition the local Bishop to consider dividing the parish and Fr. Francis Kwofie will become the pastor at the newly created parish.

Fr. Francis reflects with us on his experience thus far on his new assignment in an area known as 'Rio Seco' (Dry River):

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



Fr. David and Fr. Francis on a visit to Rio Seco

parish. While Fr. Denis took me on a tour to show me the territorial limits of the parish, we visited Rio Seco. On a plot demarcated for a church we found a group of women cooking. After some introductory exchanges, we were told the church land had been encroached upon by some families, and the women had come together to protect the land. They were, at this time, cooking some food to sell to the community members, the proceeds of which would be used to build a wall to protect the land. We were touched by their faith and devotion. Before leaving I promised to be with them the following Saturday in order to celebrate Mass.



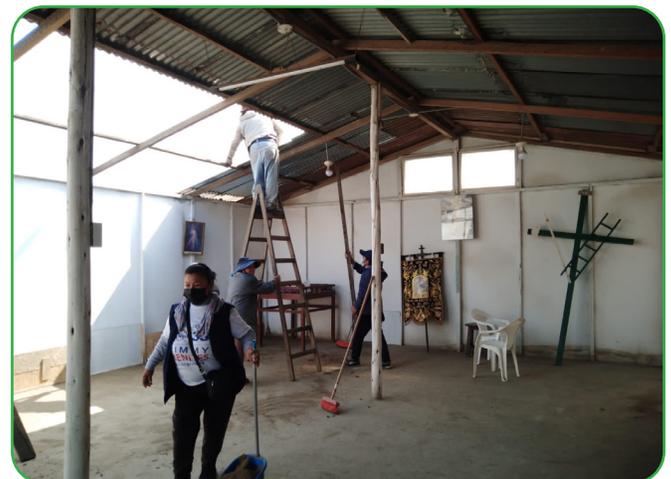
Clearing land for the new church

St. James Society, for assistance to build a new place of worship at this site. Our request was duly considered and approved. The people were so joyful upon hearing about the promise of a new church. During the next four months, a simple church structure was developed, and this spacious well-protected Church is located in the prime area of the town. Once the town becomes fully developed this region will also have a police station, a town square and a clinic. The people collaborated on the building of the church and assisted in every way they could. In a relatively short time the community had a place of worship they could be proud of. Their appreciation to the St. James Society for this answered prayer is boundless and all of us are deeply grateful to our benefactors and supporters who helped make this new church possible.

On a bright Peruvian summer afternoon in December 2020, while the deadly corona virus continued to rage, we paid a pastoral visit to the sprawling valley town of Rio Seco. The terrain is dry, rocky, sandy, and dusty and lacks vegetation. We had already visited four different communities. I had just been appointed to the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Torre Blanca, on the north side of Lima, in the Diocese of Carabayllo. I was assigned to work with Fr. Denis

Parry here, with a specific responsibility for the newly developing missions in the rural part of the

Come Saturday, I was there as promised, and I have been there every week since then. About ten people were present for our first meeting. Appropriate social distancing could not be observed since the only ventilation was through the main door. The building, as a whole, was unfit for any kind of meeting or celebration. We knew something had to be done if we were to continue to meet regularly. A request was made to Fr. David Costello, Superior General of the



Blessed with a seed of faith, a respectable chapel has been constructed and we have priests ready to foster and form the faith community. Fortunately for us, Fr. Eddie Rogan has also been added to our team of priests in this region.

People have been migrating to Rio Seco from the mountains, over the past thirty years. About twenty years ago, one of the new settlers erected a cross behind her house. This soon became a focal point where fellow immigrants gathered to pray and express their faith. A devotional group was born. They called themselves *Santa Rosa de Rio Seco* and through hard work and dedication, this group of faithful acquired land and constructed a small chapel where they gathered to pray. On different occasions, particularly the feast day of Saint Rose of Lima, they searched for a priest who could celebrate Holy Mass with them. Though only a handful of baptisms and first communions had been celebrated in the past, the commitment and dedication of this group to their faith has been unwavering. Such was the situation of this particular faith community when I arrived. A seed had been planted, and the community grew hungry to see it flourish.

On Thursdays we typically meet in the late afternoon, for a devotion to the Blessed Virgin and for Bible Study. This is a fruitful encounter of faith sharing. Weekend Mass occurs on Saturday evenings and the number attending mass is growing weekly. It is our hope that when covid restrictions are removed and schools are reopened, catechism classes will begin. In the meantime, we have a growing list of people who have promised to become catechists. These volunteers are currently undergoing faith formation themselves, in order to better teach the children when life returns to normal. This will position Rio Seco to take off as an active catholic community. In addition to Rio Seco, we are also focusing on two other communities in need of revival: Chocas and Puquio. These are predominantly farming communities. In the past some religious sisters had worked here but due to their dwindling numbers and their advanced age, the Sisters are unable to continue the work they so beautifully started. We, the St. James priests, are earnestly engaging these communities for a revival. Chocas already has a church but requires the reorganization of the people and parish. Puquio has an incomplete church that still needs a roof. For all of the years when that Puquio church was dormant, many of the people left and joined other evangelical communities in the area. Our strategy will be to engage all of those who stayed home and have yet to join a faith community in order to convert new members.



Fr. Francis leading faith formation and Bible Study



Fr. Eddie distributing Holy Communion



Feast of the Assumption, August 15

Almighty and Everlasting God, You have taken up Body and Soul into the heavenly glory the Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of Your Son: Grant, we beseech You, that we may be worthy to be partakers of her glory. Through Jesus Christ Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen

All in all, the mission to Rio Seco and its neighboring areas is yielding much fruit. Should we be steadfast in our engagement with the faithful, I believe the church has great potential here. The people often say that they were abandoned not only by the state but also by the church. Thankfully, we have been able to again create the awareness that Christ has not left his people orphans; that despite the shortage of missionaries and the ravages of the pandemic, there is hope for the future. We are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Never before have I come so close to the reality of the words of Jesus -- "the harvest is rich, but the laborers are few." More than ever before, the church needs missionaries and benefactors to labor in his vineyard.

Sincere thanks to Fr. Francis for sharing with us all that is going on at our newest mission. Thanks also to Fr. Denis and Fr. Eddie, together all three St. James Priests are ministering in the area, where there is great need. Thanks especially, to all of you - our benefactors and friends - for continuing to make it possible for the St. James Society to fulfill the mandate of our founder, time and time again.



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
 Hosted By: Rev. Peter Quinn

With Every Good Wish in Christ,



Rev. David Costello, Director



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St. James Society
24 Clark Street
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For the purpose of wills, bequests, and living trusts, our official name is:

The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle, Inc.

24 Clark Street • Boston, MA 02109 • (617) 742-4715 • e: office@socstjames.com • socstjames.com