



FRIENDS

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

May 2022



A Thing of Beauty...

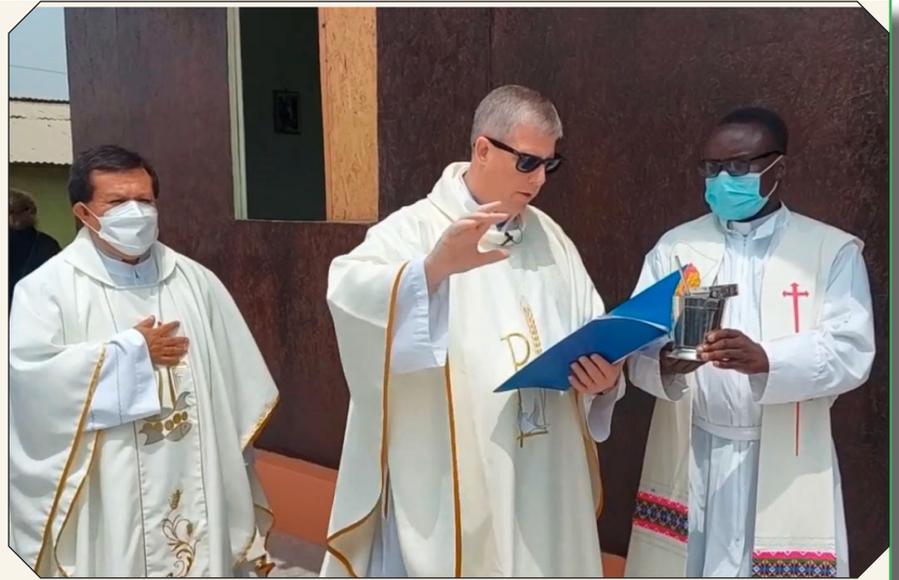
Dear Friends,

Fr. Francis Kwofie currently serves at our newest mission site, which forms part of the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Carabylo, on the North side of Lima. He is responsible for several communities along the road to Santa Rosa de Quives, the town where St. Rose of Lima was born and reared. Hence the reason most of the chapels in his communities are dedicated to St. Rose.

I was able to visit with Fr. Francis for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, which was a joy-filled and faith-filled experience. Fr. Francis updates us on the activities at this new mission site:

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

After the rains comes the sunshine. The past two years have been a time of great tribulation for me and my parishioners. The pain of death, loss, sickness, hunger and helplessness has been experienced in varying degrees. However, through this, we know that the grace of God is sufficient for us and also that His power is made perfect in weakness (II Cor 12: 9-10). What can separate us from the love of God? (Rm. 8: 35). There is much to be thankful for. My parishioners are so appreciative of even the smallest acts of kindness that they typically celebrate and give thanks whenever possible.



Therefore, it was not a surprise when they celebrated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in thanksgiving, amidst much pomp and fanfare. They demonstrated such heartfelt thanks to God for the new church building we built in Carabylo and for the new Catholic programs and communities we established here. The parishioners also surprised me by acknowledging and celebrating my 20 years of priestly ministry. All in all, it was a wonderful blessed celebration!

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is not only a solemn and Holy Day of Obligation in Peru, but this day is also a national holiday. We were fortunate to have the Superior General of the Society of St James, Fr. David Costello, join us during this wonderful occasion. All of the communities under my jurisdiction gathered at the largest of them, Rio Seco, where we inaugurated their new chapel, Santa Rosa. It was a moment of great joy for our parishioners who could not have imagined that we could build such a beautiful place of worship within just a few months. The members of the parish were also very happy and grateful to have a dedicated priest for this parish and community. We celebrated Mass and the parishioners gave thanks to God, and also to the benefactors of the St. James Society, who helped fund the building of chapel.





This particular community is now filled with a strong and robust catholic presence. We have a thriving catechesis program and regular weekday masses here, which I celebrate. What really impressed me, during this Holy Day celebration, was the large number of non-church goers in the area who attended this Holy Day Mass, to specifically demonstrate their deep appreciation of the Society of St. James for the kindnesses and generosity bestowed upon them by the Society.

These are the people we hope to draw into our regular Mass celebrations and catechesis programs. At various times and in very difficult moments the Society of St. James has continued to support all people in this community who are most in need of help, kindness and generosity, particularly the sick and the aged who receive food items from our Comedores (soup kitchens). For the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, these sick and elderly either came to the Mass or sent family members to represent them at the Mass. Some of these people also came the day before the Mass to help me clean the surroundings in preparation for the big event. It was a day of many surprises for me. In addition to all of these wonderful blessings, I was presented at the entrance of the church with a beautiful white chasuble by one of the women parishioners who bought this for me, expressly for the feast day. I was deeply touched by this thoughtful and generous gesture. After the ceremony, I traveled to Los Lomas, with the Superior General, Fr. David Costello, to check on the progress of the chapel and the comedor. We also went to Santa Rosa de Puquio where we are rebuilding a chapel. During these visits, I was pleasantly surprised when the children began singing "Happy Birthday to You" while presenting me with a big cake, in the shape of a bible, to honor my 20 years of priesthood.



*“O Mary,
conceived without sin,
pray for us who have recourse
to thee.”*



I will long remember this feast of the Immaculate Conception, 2021, for the joy it brought me. I recall the words of John Keats, from Endymion:

*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing*

The same joy, peace and happiness I felt on my Ordination Day welled up inside me as I witnessed the appreciation in the eyes and souls of those I serve here in Peru. It reinforced my belief in the good work the Society of St. James does here and I feel very relevant to the mission of Christ to the world, thanks to the great graces bestowed on me from God. I am deeply grateful to all of you, our benefactors, without whom our missionary could not succeed. Each time I pray the words of Jesus; “...and he took bread gave thanks” and “...he took the cup and gave thanks,” I pray for you, our benefactors.

I am also reminded to give thanks for everything and to share with others, without reserve, with a grateful heart.

The Memorare

*Remember,
O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that any one who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help or sought thy
intercession,
was left unaided.
Inspired with this confidence,
I fly unto thee,
O Virgin of virgins my Mother;
to thee do I come,
before thee I stand,
sinful and sorrowful;
O Mother of thy Word Incarnate,
despise not my petitions,
but in thy clemency hear and answer me.*

Amen.

*With Every Good Wish in Christ,
Rev. David Costello, Superior General*

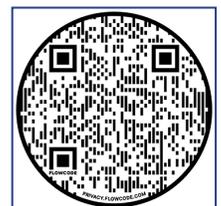


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