



# FRIENDS

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

January 2022



## Christ's Love in Action

*Dear Friends,*

Happy New Year to our benefactors and friends. We hope you had a blessed Christmas!

Fr. Cecilia Moraga, writes to us from Sicuani, where he shares his recent experiences among the Down Syndrome children in Sicuani and Santo Tomas, Peru. Fr. Cecilio is a priest from the Diocese of San Diego, CA, who is based in Sicuani with the Society of St. James.

*E*ach year, we Missionaries of Saint James the Apostle who work in South America eagerly await the Annual Mission Cooperative Plan to receive our preaching assignments in the United States. This is our opportunity to travel to the United States, visit our families, relatives and friends in our home countries, and most importantly, it is an opportunity to visit various parishes in the United States in order to share our

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

experiences from Mission work in South America. We work with the Office of the Propagation of the Faith in various archdioceses in the U.S. and we spread the word. Hopefully, we grow our family of supporters as we spread the word about the work we do in Peru. The parishes that receive us allow us to speak at each mass in the parish on a given weekend. During the Masses we request prayers from the parishioners as well as financial support to help fund the various important projects that we are involved in, here in Peru. The beauty of the annual Mission Cooperative Plan is that we priests have an opportunity to meet other Missionaries from all over the World. We discover that we share so many things in common while we also discover the uniqueness of every Mission Area and the needs of the local church that



every Missionary represents.



While we priests are working full-time serving parishes in Peru, we occasionally also find an opportunity to become involved in specific social development programs or other works of social justice for the sake of the “Poorest of the Poor”. One such project I am involved in, is for Down Syndrome children, at the Down Syndrome Centers in Sicuani and Santo Tomas. During this past summer’s annual Mission Appeal homilies, I spoke about these Centers in Peru. From June to September this year, I visited a number of parishes in California, Massachusetts and New York. In addition to preaching for the Society of St. James within the Archdiocese of Boston, I also preached for the Missionary Cooperation Plan for the Diocese of Sicuani in Peru, South America. Sicuani is where I have been based during the past 5 years. Each time I preached, I only had one message to convey: We are all missionaries. We belong to one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church. We are all apostles!

Some of us are called to leave our homes in order to serve in other countries where the most needy or the “Poorest of the Poor” among us, our brothers and sisters, live. Some are called to support the missions from their home country by raising money, spreading the word and more. Missionaries are priests, religious men and women and lay faithful of various different backgrounds and professions. Even if one is not called to go to a foreign land, we are still asked to support the Missions with our prayers and financial sacrifices.

The focus of my Missionary Cooperation Plan homily this year was Lionel and the two-hundred Children with Down Syndrome in Sicuani and Santo Tomas, Peru where we have the CEBE-San Miguel and CEBE-Santo Tomas (Centro de Educacion Basica Especial – *Special Education Centers*). The Children with Down Syndrome come to these two centers weekdays, from Monday to Friday. We serve them hot meals. We teach them catechism, which is first and foremost, because the Word of God is far more important and necessary than the food that perishes. The children are also trained in personal hygiene, cooking, baking, dancing and football. Additionally, we introduce the children to technology and show them how to use computers and computer applica-



tions. Children with physical and psychological health problems are attended to by the medical personnel and physical therapists, also provided by the Diocese of Sicuani. They receive wonderful care during their days at CEBE-San Miguel and CEBE-Santo Tomas (Centro de Educacion Basica Especial).



Caring for Children with Down Syndrome is a full-time job, most especially for their mothers who care for them with great love. These mothers demonstrate boundless love, patience, and understanding as they live out their parental responsibility to the fullest. The mothers of Down Syndrome children receive much more in return since their children are so optimistic, smiling, and joyful. While some of these children may not be able to clearly communicate verbally, they express their happiness, joy and love and appreciation with their very expressive hugs and kisses and frequent signs of affections for others. The Downs Syndrome Children give back so much more in return, than they receive. They pour forth on us all, great hope and love as they demonstrate Christ’s love in action.



*Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children.  
And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave Himself up  
for us,  
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”.*  
*Ephesians 5:1-2*

**O**n October 20, 2021, the Diocese of Sicuani, led by Bishop Pedro Alberto Bustamante Lopez, celebrated the dedication of the Comedor for Children with Down Syndrome. The Comedor, the kitchen with all of its appliances and utensils, was made possible by the very generous donations of one of the Society’s benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. James and Cecelia Simon, and their “Grupo de Veinte” foundation, which is based out of San Diego, California. During the dedication of the Comedor, the Staff, the Children and their Parents all joined together to celebrate. It was the very first gathering for them, for more than two years, since the onset of the COVID-19 Crisis. This gathering was a very festive and beautiful celebration, marked by great joy instead of sorrow, which has been so often prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. This joyous occasion was almost like Christmas for those who were present, especially for those children with Down Syndrome who were able to see their teachers and classmates, once again, for the very first time in a couple of years. They were singing and dancing for joy! The children and staff and families all enjoyed the simple lunch that was served. The lunch was made possible by all of you, our benefactors. Everybody was very grateful for what they received that day at the Comedor. May this simple article inspire more of our FRIENDS to keep on praying and supporting our Children with Down Syndrome in Sicuani, Peru. Remember, there is so much joy in giving and our Lord rewards the generous. Our Lord Himself is most generous. *“Blessed is the one who considers the poor! In the day of trouble the Lord delivers him; the Lord protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;”* (Psalm 41:1-3).

**M**ay we remember that during this recent Christmas Season, our Savior and Lord came to us as a Child, born in a stable. Jesus came into the world in humble and poor circumstances and he continues to come to us through the children, especially children with Down Syndrome. At the Down Syndrome Centers in Sicuani and Santo Tomas, Peru we witness these beautiful children; we are recipients of their unconditional love and we are reminded, daily, that life is filled with so many blessings which we should be grateful and joyful for. God Bless Us All.

**T**hank you Fr. Cecilio for sharing the story of the Downs Syndrome Centers in Sicuani. We continue to be humbled and feel gratitude for the ongoing generosity of you, our benefactors of the Society of St. James. Please continue to pray for our priests and for an increased vocation to the St. James Society as we begin another year!

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

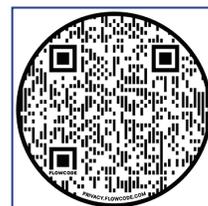


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