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SPECIAL NEEDS

Ecuador—Uniforms and School Supplies for Children in Portoviejo—\$4,400

These children come from the poorest of poor families, who are saving everything they can to make sure their children have a good education in the private schools.

Ecuador—Access to Clean Water for the Soup Kitchens and Convents—\$6,465

As tap water is non-potable in Ecuador, Help the Helpless is raising funds to install two new water purifiers in the Home of the Mother's soup kitchens. This project also includes maintenance of the water purifiers in the school and convents.


India—Drying Area for Wet Clothes—\$2,445

St. Mary's School does not have access to drying machines for wet clothes, instead using clotheslines in the courtyard where the children play. This project funds the construction of a designated area outside exclusively for air-drying clothes.

SPECIAL THANKS

Thank you to all who donated to the Christmas 2023 Special Needs. You raised over \$9,000: enough to fully fund the construction of bathrooms for five families in Ecuador, as well as the addition of doors and windows to the homes of four families! May God bless you for your continued generosity to those in need.

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Help the Helpless



Easter Newsletter

March 2024



Easter Letter From Fr. Altier

Dear Benefactors,

The Lord is risen, Alleluia! This is a proclamation of the greatest event in human history: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is also the proclamation of the greatest cause of hope in human history. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, there would be no hope for us to get to Heaven. Of course, if He had not risen, He would not be the Christ, but an impostor. Jesus demonstrated Himself to be the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, through His passion, death, and resurrection. We know He was always the Christ because He is the Son of God who came into the world to save us, but we can only say this with assurance because he demonstrated Himself to be the One foretold in the Scriptures in some 300 specific prophecies. There are many who could fulfill some of these prophecies, but only One Who has fulfilled them all and therefore, only One Whom we proclaim to be Lord and God.

Another point I like to reflect on is that during the three days our Lord was in the tomb, the faith of the Church remained alive in only one person: the Blessed Virgin Mary. No one else believed Jesus would rise from the dead. Our blessed Lady alone remained faithful, believing that God would fulfill all He had promised.

Now, our belief in the Person of Jesus and in His resurrection from the dead spurs us on to act on this faith. We know of His mercy in our own lives, and we have chosen to bring that mercy to others. We know He is the Christ and we proclaim His love for us through our love for those we serve. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Help the Helpless, I thank you for your faith and charity. You are bringing the love of Jesus to those who might otherwise not know Him. Your generosity gives hope to those who might otherwise despair. We make our act of faith knowing that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that the reward our Lord will give us will be waiting for us at the gate of Heaven. Thank you for your faithfulness and for bringing joy into the lives of so many beautiful souls in India and Ecuador. They, along with all the Angels and Saints, will sing Alleluia (Praise the Lord) in your honor on the great day of your resurrection from the dead. We are all praying for an abundant outpouring of the grace of the risen Christ for you and your loved ones.

God bless you,

Fr. Robert J. Altier

Pictured above: Mass in Playa Prieta with local parishioners

News From the Sisters in Playa Prieta, Ecuador

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

Happy Easter! We are writing to you from Playa Prieta to tell you about some of the activities we have carried out in the last few months, both at school and with members of the community.

Here on the coast of Ecuador, we finish the school year in March. The heavy rain season is in March and April, so the so-called "summer vacation" begins now. To celebrate the end of this school year, we made a pilgrimage with the girls who graduated from Sagrada Familia (Holy Family School), where we teach. We visited different historical and religious places, and we also went to the highlands of

Ecuador to visit a priest friend who always welcomes us with much joy. Additionally, we visited the city of Cuenca, several religious convents of other communities, and finally Cajas, a place of some Marian apparitions. It was a victory of grace, as almost all the girls were able to go to confession. How good the Lord is!

We also had a mission pilgrimage with the lay adults of Home of the Mother, by visiting the Fortín mission in Guayaquil. We helped with their summer program and also visited families in great need. One of the ladies commented, "I thought I was the poorest person, but now I realize that I am not," and began to cry. The Lord and Our Mother touched their hearts during this pilgrimage. These spiritual fruits were reflected in the happiness on their faces as they began to understand how much joy there is in giving. They also reflected that they should not be afraid of what the Lord might ask of them.

A few months ago we started having holy hours in Riochico, and it is going very well. The hope is that soon we will be able to open an adoration chapel in the parish. This is a victory, especially for us whose mission is the defense of the Eucharist! We count on your prayers.



Mass with the Home of the Mother and local parishioners.



A gathering with the lay adults of Home of the Mother.

During the summer vacation, many children and young people are coming to our camps, Holy Week gatherings, youth programs, etc. It is a celebration of so much spiritual work being done in these young souls!

In a few months, we will begin the new 2024-2025 school year. We ask for prayers for these young people that Our Mother has entrusted to us, so that they may be open to all that the Lord wants to give them during this new season.

Thank you very much for everything! God bless you.

- The Sisters of Playa Prieta

News From the Sisters in Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dearest Friends of Help the Helpless,

Christ is risen, Alleluia, Alleluia! The Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother in Guayaquil send warm greetings and Easter wishes to all of you.

These are days full of joy for the victory of Christ over sin and death. Although we will only be able to truly experience His definitive victory in heaven, the Lord is allowing us here to witness many of His earthly victories over our suffering and sin. We share with you some of these victories that we have seen here in Guayaquil.

At one of our soup kitchens, we met a boy whose mother was heavily addicted to drugs. His father had left the family, and so the boy lived with his mother and sisters during the height of her addiction. When we learned his story, we began to teach him in the ways of the Faith. As this mother saw how her son became motivated in the Faith, she decided have him baptized! Eventually, she asked us for help with her addiction and is now in a detoxification center, while also receiving catechesis for her own baptism at her request. We have explained the situation to her children, and they are praying for their mother that she will have the strength to return home healthy. Please pray for her, also!

This time of the year is the school vacation period for all the children. We did not want to give them conventional vacations, since at home they forget everything they have learned during the school year. Instead, this year we started a school vacation program for them. They receive catechesis, as well as some reinforcement on academic lessons. We also acquired two homemade, removable swimming pools, which we set up in a classroom. The children quite enjoy them. Many of them had never been in a pool before, and they were thrilled! Their innocent joy surely consoled the heart of Jesus, for there are so many people who are no longer able to rejoice with that kind of innocence.

Know that all of you are present in our daily prayers!

May the Risen Christ be our authentic joy.

- The Sisters of Guayaquil



A local family in Guayaquil.

News From the Sisters in Portoviejo, Ecuador

Happy Easter to you, Help the Helpless, and may the joy of the Risen Lord fill your hearts!

Greetings from the community of Servant Sisters in Portoviejo, Ecuador. We are happy to tell you about what we have been doing here in our new mission in the neighborhood of San Alejo. With the help and collaboration of the university students in our new campus ministry center, and also with members of the Home of the Mother, we have been able to accomplish great things in San Alejo.

We began with a Christmas festival a couple of months ago with Christmas songs, games, sweets, and gifts. And soon, we will be starting up monthly meetings with the children of this neighborhood. We have continued with the half-day family retreats with those who have children in catechesis, and this has been a wonderful way to get to know the families, as many still do not know us, yet.

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continued from page three: Additionally, we just finished Spiritual Exercises for the members of the Home of the Mother. What a great way to start Lent, and also this vacation from school! Now that we are not teaching classes, we are working full-time to prepare our summer camps for young women in the communities of Playa Prieta and Chone. We will have two 10-day camps with about 70 women each. We are also restoring the catechism classrooms, which were very much in need of attention: treating the termites, fixing broken fans, patching up holes and cracks, painting the walls, etc. The girls in the Home of Mother Residence here in Portoviejo are helping us with this project.

We always remember our benefactors in our prayers because without you, it would be impossible to do even half of the work we do here in our mission. We ask you to also keep us in your prayers, especially since we are still a young community and there's still much work to be done! May the Lord bless you and your families and repay your generosity as He knows how to.

Sincerely,

- Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother in Portoviejo



Restoring the catechism classrooms.



Arunkumar Hariharan receiving his new prosthetic leg in a special ceremony.

News From India

Dear Loving Friends and Benefactors,

I send Warm Greetings and Easter wishes to all you benefactors. We truly value your kindness and generosity, and we feel blessed to have you as part of St. Mary's. I am thankful to say that, with the grace of our Lord Almighty and the blessings of our Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier, the children of St. Mary's are happy and healthy. We have an update regarding Arunkumar Hariharan, the child from St. Mary's Handicapped School who received an advanced artificial limb during the Tri-Function celebration

on December 9, 2023, thanks to your donations. He had been facing many difficulties due to his old, artificial limb, which often broke and caused him pain. Thanks to your kindness and generosity, we were able to order the latest advanced model of artificial limbs to ease his struggles. We ensured it was made of soft material and looked like a normal limb. It was an emotional moment as he stepped onto the stage, confidently wearing his prosthetic limb. His father's heartfelt gratitude to the donors who had helped his son brought tears to many eyes. It was clear how much this support meant to them. Seeing the child now able to walk comfortably, thanks to the generosity of others, was a genuinely heartwarming moment.

Additionally, on that same day, all children at St. Mary's received new athletic shoes, purchased with your donations. With their new shoes, they have been able to practice sports and activities so much more, and many of them participated in many competitions. They are so happy to have this opportunity to stay healthy and active. As you know, one of our St. Mary's children, Ganasekaran Thamilselvan, had been selected for the First Deaf World Games in Brazil in January. He trained day and night and acquired all the skills for the competitions. Unfortunately, we found out at the last minute that the Indian national team could not participate at all in the competition due to visa issues. We, the St. Mary's family members, have consoled him and thanked him for his training.

The Central Government elections are ahead, and the examinations may be postponed for the upcoming elections. All the St. Mary's children are preparing for their final examination. Please pray for all our children for their success in the forthcoming board examinations.

We are always grateful to Help the Helpless, and we pray for all you benefactors for your endless support and prayers. We love you all. Once again, I wish you all a Happy Easter. Thanking you in Christ.

- I. Mariaselvam



Students of St. Mary's with their new shoes, purchased with your donations.