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SPECIAL NEEDS

Ecuador – Construction of Bathrooms in Flor de Bastion – \$5,000.00

Five of our sponsored families are without a bathroom in their houses. Help The Helpless undertakes this project to provide them with clean facilities they can use inside, preventing risk of infection and disease.

Ecuador – Building Doors and Windows for Four Families – \$4,500.00

These families have no doors inside their homes. Since they live in dangerous areas, this increases the chance of violence or abuse. Providing the homes with doors and windows fulfills basic rights to privacy and also safety from the elements.

India – Chairs for Smart Classrooms – \$1,386.50

St. Mary's School is in need of 40 chairs in their brand new smart classrooms. These classrooms integrate technology with the students' everyday studies to facilitate their understanding and depth of knowledge.

THANK YOU

Help the Helpless would like to offer a special message of gratitude to all who donated to the Summer 2023 Special Needs. We raised enough money to fund every single project! May God bless you for your continued generosity and support.

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Help the Helpless



Christmas Newsletter

December, 2023



Christmas Note from Fr. Altier

Dear Benefactors,

This Christmas stands to be one of the most important in modern history. I say this because so many people have lost what Christmas is truly about. We have replaced the birth of our Lord with lights, decorations, and presents. While none of these things are problems in themselves, making them the greater priority is. In the midst of the chaos we are dealing with in the world and in our own country, we recall that the Prince of Peace was born into our troubled world. He came to save our souls and to open Heaven for us, but His Passion reminds us of the trouble and chaos that was required for our salvation.

The peace and joy of Christmas stands in contrast to the Passion which, on the natural level, was anything but peace and joy. Perhaps this year people will look beyond the externals and put their focus on the love of God in human form as seen in the divine Child born for us in Bethlehem. In the midst of the fear and violence, the Nativity provides us with peace and good will.

Our benefactors have understood this for a long time and have chosen to make the lives of others better in the same spirit of charity that we see in the love of the Mother and Child of Bethlehem. For so many people, Christmas is the most favored of all the seasons and celebrations of the year. It is light in the darkness, peace in the chaos, joy in the sadness, love in the midst of the selfishness. In other words, the mystery of Christmas stands in almost complete contrast to everything around us.

As we recognize that most of what we are experiencing is bigger than we are, it forces us to look beyond ourselves and find the answer to our problems in the One that God has sent into the world to be our light and our hope. Thank you for recognizing Him and for acting on your faith in Him. Your charity to those in need is a great blessing for those who are helped, but it is also a great witness to your faith in Jesus. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Help the Helpless, I extend my sincere thanks to and appreciation for each of you. I pray that you and your loved ones know the peace, joy, and love of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as we celebrate this most blessed day and season.

God bless you,
Fr. Robert J. Altier

Pictured Above: Child at Guayaquil Soup Kitchen

A Message from the Sisters in Portoviejo, Ecuador

Dear Help The Helpless Friends and Family,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the community of Servant Sisters in Portoviejo, our most recent foundation in Ecuador! We recently celebrated our one year anniversary (on October 24th) with Mass celebrated in our community's small chapel with our Archbishop Eduardo Castillo to give thanks to the Lord for having brought us here to work for His glory and the salvation of so many souls.

In our first year here, we have dedicated a lot of time to getting to know the community here in our parish as well as in the surrounding parishes. In our parish we offer catechism, youth groups, liturgical formation, door to door evangelization, and everything we can think of to build up our community and create a family environment for our parishioners. We organize family retreats with games, adoration, formation for adults and children, and communal meals. It has been a beautiful way to reach out to the families and get to know them.

We are also continuing with the same kind of humanitarian aid that we do in our other Ecuador missions: school scholarships, medicines, food baskets for immigrant families, etc. We are continuing our work with the Pro-Life Committee in the diocese, and last February we held a weeklong national pro-life congress here in Portoviejo's seminary in collaboration with Human Life International.

Our bishop has also entrusted us with the college ministry for the 32,000 students at the Technical University of Manabí (about a kilometer away from the Portoviejo cathedral). So far, we have organized a Christmas Novena, a student retreat, a movie-forum, monthly volunteer activities, several workshops in collaboration with different faculty, weekly formation meetings, and about ten on campus Masses.

We are planning a regional Youth Eucharistic Revival around the feast of Corpus Christi next year and are expecting several hundred participants for this weekend long event! Activities include a Eucharistic feast, perpetual adoration, and of course Mass and the Corpus Christi procession.

We have fostered connections between the youth of Portoviejo and several local organizations dedicated to the works of mercy. We have taken children several times to visit the Father Matías Foundation – a home for cancer patients with little or no economic means – as well as to Solca, one of the principal cancer hospitals in Ecuador. We have also taken them to the Home of Bethlehem, a haven for children and adolescents who come from troubled family situations. Our next youth activity will be serving in the Cottolengo hospital in Manta.

We have also taken the youth on several pilgrimages, including to Cajas (a Marian apparition site in Ecuador), as well as to our sister mission in Guayaquil. Our intention in the next few months is to follow in the footsteps of our Sisters in Guayaquil and establish the same kind of mission. We have already found the neighborhood in most need (San Alejo) and have spoken to the parish priest there about working together. Stay tuned for more news about the San Alejo mission – we will be beginning very shortly!

Please be assured of our gratitude for all that you do to help us evangelize and live Christian charity here in Ecuador. May this Christmas season bring many blessings and may the Child Jesus renew our hearts with the joy of His presence among us.

Sincerely,
The Community of Servant Sisters in Portoviejo



Catechesis class for the students



Sister with a local student



Sisters with two school children
and their families

A Message from the Sisters in Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dearest friends and benefactors of Help the Helpless:

How quickly time goes by. Another year full of graces and manifestations of the immense Mercy of our Lord.

It has certainly been a very hard year for the people of Ecuador. The political instability has caused a great increase in violence, and in the marginalized areas where we work, this increase in violence is very noticeable. Parents of our sponsored children, whose salary goes all to food, are being extorted by drug traffickers who threaten their life and the lives of their families. Children in our soup kitchens are becoming accustomed to the sounds of gunshots and the sights of violence around them. Added to this is the threat of the El Nino climate crisis and the rising price of basic foods. But as this evil threatens to take hope from our hearts, so is it restored in our Mother Mary and her Son. Where sin abounded, grace abounds more, and this Grace is none other than Our Lord Jesus.

Even if there are reasons for sadness, there are more reasons to say: "God has been great with us and we are joyful!" We share with you some of these joys below.

- As a result of our Sisters and priests teaching at the soup kitchens, there have been 32 baptisms this year, several marriages of mothers whose children frequent the kitchen, and catechization of more than 200 children.
- We have provided new housing for several families living in subhuman conditions so that they may live with dignity proper to children of God.
- We enjoyed a special community meal that we offered for Our Lady's birthday in two of the poorest and most violent sectors of the area. Even the poorest of the poor were able to participate in the birthday of their Heavenly Mother.
- Finally, we are most proud of the Medical Brigade where more than 200 people were attended to physically and spiritually. We fed and clothed them, and our priests led us in the Rosary and heard confessions.

This is only part of what we are able to enjoy, thanks to your generosity. As we always tell you, we have the privilege of being direct witnesses to these works of mercy, but nothing could be done if the Lord had not touched your hearts with love and shared with you His same generosity towards His poorest.

God bless you for all the good you do, and Merry Christmas!

– The Sisters of Guayaquil



A family in the poorest sector of Guayaquil

A Message from the Sisters in Playa Prieta, Ecuador

Dear Help the Helpless benefactors,

Merry Christmas! We hope that the child Jesus fills you with abundant graces, and that He might grant you light to be able to recognize His generous and provident hand, even in midst of painful and difficult situations, just as the Blessed Virgin Mary spent her days, trusting in the providence of God and always seeking His Divine Will. Our Mother teaches us so much and gives us so many examples of faith, hope and charity! Let us always be her disciples.

We want to tell you a little about how we have spent these recent months in our community, particularly within the Sagrada Familia Educational Center. The month of October was especially blessed: we celebrated the month of the Holy Rosary with the daily recitation of the holy rosary. Each class prayed a mystery of the rosary at the change of hour.

continued on page four

Playa Prieta, continued

Continued from page three: We had two very clear intentions. The first intention was to ask that the Virgin Mary intercede for our students' personal intentions. Since Our Mother of the Rosary is also Our Lady of Victory, we entrusted these intentions to her protection, certain that She will fight for us. The second intention was for the souls suffering the ravages of war in Palestine and Israel. We have the tradition that each class in our school raises funds for a mission country or a specific missionary that we know. This month, given the urgent need, we chose to send the funds to the missionaries in the Gaza Strip. All kinds of activities were carried out to raise these funds: bingo, a soccer tournament, food sales, raffles, etc. We give thanks to Jesus who gives us the opportunity to sacrifice ourselves out of love for those who suffer, since it is these acts of mercy that empty us of ourselves and fill us with the love of God.

We ask for prayers especially for so many people suffering the ravages of war at this time. May the Child Jesus and his Most Holy Mother be their comfort and strength. Thank you again for so much generosity that makes the work of God that we do here possible.

God bless you,
The Servants of the Home of the Mother in Playa Prieta

Update from India

Dear loving friends and benefactors,

Greetings! We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Marvelous New Year of 2024!

With the blessing of God Almighty and the late Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier, and due to your generosity, dear benefactors, St. Mary's School celebrates another successful year. We are so grateful for all of your for your prayers and support. We are excited to announce that December 2023 brings the 25 year anniversary of St. Mary's School. We have much planned for our Silver Jubilee party.

2 Corinthians 9:15 proclaims "Let us thank God for his priceless gift!" Like this Bible verse, you have extended your hands towards us and shared priceless gifts with us all. May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you abundantly. We are St. Mary's are wholeheartedly praying for you always.

Recently, the St. Mary's Deaf-Mute School sent five students to the sports competitions in Bangalore. These competitions were hosted by the First Deaf World Youth Games! They all won prizes at the national level! We are especially proud of our student Ganasekaran Thamilselvan, who won first place in both the 100m and 200m dash. He will be traveling to Brazil to participate in the First Deaf World Youth Games this January!

This is the greatest milestone any of our students has ever completed. We are in the process of securing his passport and visa right now, and we pray for no complications. Thank the Lord for His goodness! We are all so proud, and his parents are so pleased. On behalf of the family, thank you to you, dear benefactors. Please pray for him throughout his training.

We are so grateful to all of you, dear benefactors, and we are always praying for you!

Once again, wishing you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year of 2024!

Thanking you with warm regards,
I Mariaselvam

Administrator of St. Mary's School



Students Outside the Sagrada Familia Center



Selection Trials – Winners from St. Mary's