

HELP THE HELPLESS CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER



Pre-pandemic photo of the sponsored students of Playa Prieta School in Ecuador

Christmas, 2021

Special Needs

If you could help support any of these special, urgent needs, we would be so grateful.

***Purchase a prosthesis and 3 wheelchairs for disabled in Ecuador - \$3,100**

The Sisters in Ecuador know several people who are missing limbs, either due to accidents or amputations from untreated diabetes. These are very poor people who, due to the lack of health insurance or employment contracts, are unable to cover the cost of a prosthesis or a wheelchair. The cost of the prosthesis along with fitting is \$2,500, and the cost of 3 wheelchairs is \$600.00.

***Hearing Aids for the Deaf-Mute Students in India - \$12,576.38**

These funds will be used to purchase 95 hearing aids for the students of the deaf-mute school at St. Mary's.

Inside This Issue

PG. 2

Update from Chone, Ecuador, and Guayaquil, Ecuador

PG. 3

Update from St. Mary's School in India and Playa Prieta, Ecuador

PG. 4

Words of gratitude from Fr. Robert Altier and Fr. Rafael Alonso

Update from Chone, Ecuador

Dear Friends and Benefactors of HTH,

Once again we write to you in order to wish you a Merry Christmas. As we write, it is inevitable that right now the passage from the Gospel of St. Luke, in which the angels announced the birth of the Son of God to the shepherds, resounds in our hearts. It is touching to see how, just as on that night, it is still the simplest and poorest people in the eyes of the world who continue to welcome the Good News, which is a source of great joy for hearts that thirst for peace and truth. We refer to the fact that thanks to the various apostolic activities which have been carried out particularly among young people, authentic conversions of life are taking place.

This is the case of one 16-year-old girl. She lives in the countryside, almost two hours from Chone. She was invited by some friends to participate in this year's camp in Chone. There, she had an experience of the living God. She would say simply, "I have met God." After this first encounter with Jesus, her soul was in a hurry. She was anxious to know more about Him. She decided to participate in the next activity that took place a few weeks later, a silent retreat. In this atmosphere of prayer and personal encounter with God, she deepened her understanding of the immense love of God who humbled Himself. When she returned home, she could not stop talking about it. She told her mother that she had to change her life so that God could give her the peace and happiness that only He can give.

Although she was not the only one, this example is enough to thank God for all that He does for souls. Thanks to you also, because we were able to carry out both activities because of the donations you send us so generously. Many of the girls are from poor families and without your help, we would not be able to assume these expenses.

May the Lord and His Blessed Mother bless you, and we wish you a Merry Christmas!

The Servant Sisters of Chone



Update from Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dear friends of HTH,

We would like to wish you a Merry Christmas, and thank you again for all your generosity.

These days in which we remember the Holy Family looking for a shelter, we would have loved to be present and welcome them into our home or to help them and not to send them away empty-handed, suffering in their poverty. Well, what is just a wish, the Lord makes reality by his words: "What you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." The Lord identifies Himself with the humble and the poor, with the needy, and in them, He Himself receives our affection and our help.

Recent donations were used to build 6 new homes for families whose homes were falling apart. Being able to help with housing is very touching. These families have never even dreamt of living in a decent house. It is unbelievable for them to be able to have block walls instead of cane, through which neither dust nor insects can enter; being able to sleep without the rain coming in is a great comfort, especially now that the rainy season is coming. An 11-year-old boy, who used to live under the bridge, said to us: "Thank you, because you have made our dream of having a house come true. We could never have imagined living in a house of our own."

Thank you also for your help with the soup kitchens. More and more children are coming to eat there. Right now about 250 children are fed daily. We see their progress; they are not only growing physically, but also intellectually and spiritually. It is moving to hear them loudly pray the Angelus before eating, or to see how they learn to treat each other with affection when they are used to seeing only violence in their homes. The teaching of St. John of the Cross becomes a reality: "Where there is not love, put love and you will receive love."

May the Lord grant them what their hearts need. May He enrich them with the gift of charity and bring you all to heaven.

Thank you very much for everything. Merry Christmas!

The Servants of the Home of the Mother,
Guayaquil, Ecuador

An Update from St. Mary's School in India

Dear loving friends and benefactors! Greetings! We wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2022!

With the blessing of God Almighty and the invisible blessing of Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier and the kind-hearted supporters of Help The Helpless, the school for the Handicapped is celebrating its 25th year. We will have a great Silver Jubilee celebration on December 03, 2021. The Most Rev. F. Antonisamy, Bishop of Kumbakonam, will preside over the function. We are always so grateful to all the benefactors of Help The Helpless.

We are so happy to have the children back at St. Mary's. The children in grades 9-12 came back in September, 2020, and the remaining students came back on November 08, 2021. They are also excited to see us after a long time. St. Mary's now looks like a garden full of flowers. Before it was an empty space without children, but now the school is filled with the voices of the children and their smiles. We feel excited, too.

Whatever the difficulties we experience, like COVID-19, the heavy rain, the flood, the economic crisis, the fear about the future, whatever it is, the Lord Jesus, the Father, is near us and will protect us. We always have the hope that He will guide us and provide for us, especially through you, our benefactors. Help the Helpless has given great help to St. Mary's during the unexpected of the pandemic. Thank you so much. You care for St. Mary's and allow us to take care of the children.

So, once again, I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2022 on behalf of the St. Mary's children and all of us at St. Mary's. We thank you for all the embracing help and prayers you have been giving, and we pray for you, too.

Thanking you,

With warm regards, I. Mariaselvam, Administrator of St.



Mary's School in India

I. Mariaselvam welcomes back students to St. Mary's

An Update from Playa Prieta

Dear HTH benefactors,

In the past few months in Playa Prieta, Ecuador, we have been able to thank the Lord abundantly for all He has allowed us to experience. We hope this also fills your hearts with joy and thanksgiving, since God who was made poor in the portal of Bethlehem, does not stop working His miracles amongst the humble and simple hearted. After many prayers and petitions to Jesus and Our Mother, the students of Holy Family School have finally been able to start in-person classes after almost two years of receiving virtual classes from home.

We started school on Monday, November 8th, at 8 am. The immense joy, from both of the teachers and the students, was evident. We dedicated the first minutes of classes to consecrate ourselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as we usually do every day, and we continued with a deep prayer of thanksgiving. After spending so much time alone and on devices, the simple fact of being able to sit at a desk in front of a whiteboard and being with their classmates and teachers made them smile. They made comments like, "I can really learn here, sister," and "I finally understand," and so on. It was an endearing scene to see the little ones, 3 and 4 year-olds, come to their first day of school. With their backpacks almost bigger than themselves, they entered their classrooms very happily and proudly. Children from 3-11 years old now attend school twice a week while the older students come three times per week. During the other days, they receive virtual classes. There is still a group of students who receive all their classes virtually, although we hope we will soon have all the students here. We ask for prayers for everyone including the teachers, so that we can fulfill the mission He has entrusted to us: to give glory to God and to our Mother.

We wish you a blessed Christmas and New Year.

The Sisters in Playa Prieta



Students on the first day back at school

Note from Fr. Altier

Dear Benefactors,

Praised be Jesus Christ! When we think of Christmas, two things come to mind. First, and most important is the birth of our Blessed Lord, Jesus. For us at Help the Helpless, the poverty of His birth is also very profound. Jesus is God. Having chosen to come to earth and be born of our Blessed Lady, He could have been born anywhere in any circumstance He desired. The Magi, like most people, assumed the King would be born in a royal palace. Jesus chose the most humble of all places to be born, a place so humble that it was not considered fit for people, but only for animals. Although He is the glorious and blessed One, He chose to be hidden and obscure. The beauty and grandeur of a baby is evident to anyone under any circumstances. But Jesus required us to look beyond what could be seen in order to make an act of faith in Who He is and how much He loves us.

For over two decades, the benefactors of Help the Helpless have acted on this same faith and looked beyond the poverty that one can see on the surface to recognize the beauty and the dignity of the people we serve. These people may not be blessed in the worldly sense, but they are blessed abundantly in the spiritual sense. Of all people on earth, Jesus chose to be most like the poor. It would require not only looking beyond what can be seen to make an act of faith; it would require opening one's heart wide to love Him and receive His love. You have opened your hearts, not only to our Lord and His Mother, but to these beautiful children and families whom you serve with such generosity.

This brings us to the second thing that often comes to mind at Christmas. People say Christmas is a time for giving. You have done this, not only at Christmas, but throughout the year. Your generosity is outstanding. Therefore, in the spirit of this season of giving, we at Help the Helpless extend to you our heartfelt gratitude. Thank You! I am confident that in saying this, I speak not only for the members of the Board of Directors, but also for the children in India, for the families in Ecuador, and for the Sisters and staff who care for these precious children and impoverished people. More than that, making a bold statement, I think I can also speak on behalf of our Lord and our Lady. Jesus told us that whatever we do for the least of His brethren, we do for Him. We could not be in Bethlehem 2000 years ago, but the love and grace of Bethlehem continues in the places of poverty. You are able to serve the Holy Family by serving the beautiful and holy families and children you have so generously supported. Thank You! That hardly sounds like enough, but that thank you is from the heart, and from the hearts of the poor who receive your love.

Praying for an abundance of God's blessings for you and your family in the most blessed time,

Fr. Robert J. Altier
President of Help the Helpless

Note from Fr. Rafael

Dear HTH benefactors and friends:

I am getting in touch with you, as I do every year, to send this Christmas letter with my best wishes of happiness. I hope that the grace and peace of the Prince of Peace may enter into your own hearts, those of your family members, and those of all your loved ones.

This year has been a difficult year for all of us. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many deaths worldwide as well as seriously affecting many people's health. In addition to the health crisis, there has been a major economic crisis and uncertainty on all levels.

The USA suffers from great political divides. There are racial tensions, struggles within families, within churches and even within nature trying to deconstruct everything. A wave of destruction seems to want to sweep away everything already built and reduce the Western civilization to ashes.

We do not know what this destruction will come to, but we cherish the hope that the Prince of Peace will one day reign in the world and that the terms justice, equity, commitment, family, property, charity and many others will once again shine in our midst.

Thank you a thousand times over for all that you have put into our hands with so much effort to help those who have no one but us to help them.

Dear donors of HTH, we could fill several pages and we still would not finish thanking you, telling you and describing to you all that the Servant Brothers and Sisters, together with the volunteers do, thanks to the help that we receive from you. Without your generosity, none of this: construction of houses, family sponsorship, school and university scholarships, help with medicine, clothes, shoes, evangelization material, etc... etc.... could have been done. As founder of the Home of the Mother, and therefore of the Missionary Groups of the Home of the Mother, of the Servant Brothers and Sisters of the HM and of the laity of the HM, I thank you with all my heart, and I hope that one day, if not on earth, in Heaven, I will be able to say to you personally: "Thank you, thank you, thank you." But, it will not be me who will thank you; it will be the Lord Himself because "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."

With my heartfelt blessing,
Fr. Rafael Alonso