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## SPECIAL NEEDS

### Ecuador Caregiver & Volunteers Stipend - Cost: \$2,000

A stipend is needed to pay for a caregiver who will work with the elderly and for the volunteers who pack and distribute food baskets in Ecuador.

### Playa Prieta Bathroom Construction Fund - Cost \$22,000

Funds are needed for the construction of bathrooms for 10 families.


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# Help the Helpless



Easter Newsletter

April 2022



"CHOOSE LIFE, THEN, THAT YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS MAY LIVE, BY LOVING THE LORD YOUR GOD, OBEYING HIS VOICE, AND HOLDING FAST TO HIM, FOR THAT WILL MEAN LIFE FOR YOU."

(DEUT 30:19)

## News from the Sisters in Chone, Ecuador

Dear Friends and Benefactors:

In recent months, we have been participants in an intense fight in the defense of Life. On February 17<sup>th</sup>, the National Assembly of Ecuador voted on a new abortion law, with a majority of votes in favor of abortion in the case of rape. Sadly, the law was approved. We are hopeful the President of the Republic will veto this unjust law – and uphold the dignity of so many children who have been called to live.

This year we attended one of the Pro-Life demonstrations at the National Assembly in Quito. Together with the Archdiocese, we are also planning to enter schools in the upcoming months to speak to children and young people about the importance of defending Life from conception to natural death.

A necessary part of the pro-life movement is providing mothers in need with the necessary resources. Your kindness further allows us to aid mothers and pregnant women with little to no economic resources. Food, baby clothes, diapers and medicines are provided through a project which we call, "S.O.S. Mom." When we learn of a vulnerable pregnancy, we do everything in our power to talk to the mothers until they are convinced to give birth to their children.

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## News from the Sisters in Chone, Ecuador

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By helping the mothers feel supported, we can avoid the final resort of committing the crime of abortion.

From our community, "We have chosen Life..." and it is a great desire of ours that everyone accepts it, so that we might live, loving the LORD, our God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him, for that means life for us.

From Ecuador, THANK YOU to all those whose generosity makes the triumph of Life possible.

God bless you.

The Sisters in Chone



## A Message from the Sisters in Playa Prieta, Ecuador

Greetings from Playa Prieta,

We wholeheartedly wish you a Happy Easter of Resurrection! The children have just finished the school year. It has been a difficult year because, in Ecuador, we have had virtual classes practically the whole year. We hope the next school year will be in-person, without any restrictions.

We have made several changes in the school: the "Shrine" (the school's chapel) has been painted, some cement sidewalks have been fixed, and the school's perimeter wall has been built up in an area that had been left incomplete. Above all, the most exciting novelty is the complete renovation of the playground! The previous playground was very deteriorated, so we renewed everything. Now with appropriate flooring, a new swing set, a merry-go-round, teeter totters, and slides, the children can enjoy this space when they return next year.

Taking advantage of the inauguration of the children's playground and coinciding with the end of the school year, we organized a large fair for students and their families to spend a day together. With most of our families having few economic resources, we also used the fair to raise funds for our young people to attend activities and our annual camp this summer. Children made chocolate cakes they sold on the street and organized a garage sale to help earn the money needed. Their enthusiasm was beautiful. These kinds of activities are essential in helping these young people grow and mature in all aspects of their lives.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have had in-person catechism classes. We have close to a thousand children, from all different ages, signed up. (Not only from Playa Prieta but from other communities belonging to the Rio Chico parish as well). The children's catechism takes place over a 6 year period: three years in preparation to receive their First Communion and three years to receive Confirmation. They receive the sacraments during the month of August. It is beautiful to see the joy of the youngest children and the simplicity with which they approach receiving Jesus in the Eucharist. Many of the children in catechism are from our school. We are proud to observe their spiritual formation in comparison to children who come from other schools.



The new playground, made possible by your donations.

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There is also a beautiful atmosphere in our school. Teachers and students are truly united - they love the Sisters, and they love the school very much. Many of our former students come back to visit, always saying the same thing: "We miss this school! We have so many memories of our years spent here...[and] everything we learned and received here!" We are witnesses of how much good is done to these young people and how they truly come out prepared to face life.

The Blessed Virgin Mary also has a very strong presence here at the school. All who visit say they experience great peace. Additionally, the school is turning into a place of pilgrimage. Many come to visit, inspired by Sister Clare's life since she died in the earthquake. The number of visits has increased in the last two years. Even the representative from the Ministry of Education who is assigned to follow-up on our institution has become an avid visitor!

All of this is in large part thanks to you, who make all this possible. Without the much-needed material help, we could not do everything we do. We are so grateful to you, and we pray and entrust you to the Lord every day at Mass and in our prayers. The children of the school also keep you present in their prayers and sacrifices. May God repay you for all the good you do for us and may He reward all your efforts. So many souls are benefiting from your generosity!

May the Lord and Our Mother bless you, bless all your families and accompany you always.

The Sisters in Playa Prieta

## A Message from the Sisters in Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dear Help the Helpless friends:

We wish you a Happy Easter. The Lord conquers death and gives us life in fullness. The Easter experience is what we try to bring to the families and children we work with, thanks to you. May they discover how the Lord is the conqueror of death, not only physical death, but also spiritual death, psychological death, and moral death.

These are the deaths that we encounter daily: broken families, because they have not learned how to love, child abuse, violence and drug addiction. With great sadness we inform you that violence is increasing in the area of El Fortin and Flor de Bastion. There is a problem of gangs of drug dealers. Almost daily there are deaths. Behind one of the soup kitchens there was a shooting, and the father of one of the children was seriously wounded. These children grow up with fear and resentment. Violence is part of their daily lives, and they start using drugs when they are barely 12 years old. We want to give them life, and life in abundance! The soup kitchens are a wonderful tool for this work. Not only can we feed them physically, but we also educate them, love them, and correct them with affection.

The funds received from Help the Helpless for clothing and shoes were also a great blessing. With the rainy season, the children arrived with their shoes in tatters. It was beautiful to see their smiles when they saw their new tennis shoes. They loved them.

Life in abundance consists, above all, in knowing God. At the moment, we are preparing 20 children from the soup kitchens for Baptism, and several couples whose children are in the Consolata school are being prepared for marriage. Little by little these people are finding the love of God through His provident care for them.

Thank you for everything and please pray that these children, who often see so much suffering and death, can enjoy also the joy of the Resurrection. May God repay you with what your hearts need the most.

The Sisters in Guayaquil



The children receiving their new tennis shoes.

## Greetings from India

Dear Loving Friends and Benefactors,

Warm Greetings and Easter Wishes! My heartfelt gratitude to you for your prayers and constant support of St. Mary's. With the grace of our Lord and the blessings of our Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier, the school is running smoothly. The whole campus is filled with joy, smiles, and sounds of children. All these had been missed during the pandemic, but we have finally returned to the normal routine.

I would like to share a beautiful moment that happened during our Silver Jubilee celebration. We invited an alumni, Mr. Thirumurugan, a young man with only one leg, who studied in our Handicapped school in 2006. During his college days, he participated in a professional Dance Troupe and performed all over India. On the day of our Silver Jubilee, he requested to dance for us. Before his performance he spoke to the crowd about the school. He admired the updated facilities at St. Mary's, including our smart classroom, magnificent chapel, bathrooms, garden, recreational facilities, and updated accessibility for the handicapped. He also shared his appreciation for the teachers and told us that when he came to our school, he could not even balance on one leg. The school was his "first stage" and now, he is an accomplished performer! He asked to send his warm thanks to all the benefactors of the school, who made it possible for him to stand on the stage that day.

This has all happened because of your support and prayers. We are always grateful to Help the Helpless, and we are praying for all the benefactors. Please pray for all our St. Mary's children for their success in the forthcoming board examinations. We thank all of you for your prayers and support. We love you all.

Yours in Jesus,  
I.MariaSelvam, Administrator



Alumni, Mr. Thirumurugan, performs for St. Mary's Silver Jubilee



A group of students and their families celebrating at their Fair in Playa Prieta, Ecuador



Happy children who have just received new clothes!

## A Note from Father Rafael

Dear Help the Helpless Friends and Benefactors:

We are just about to celebrate Easter, and I want to tell you with great joy: CHRIST IS RISEN, ALLELUIA! And with Him, we, his mystical body, have also risen.

This year is a difficult year for everyone. The pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war have complicated all international relations and indicate a very serious fracture between peoples. The appeal of those who run this world is of little avail. But we, as men of God, believers in Jesus Christ and in the definitive triumph of the Church together with Him, cannot lose hope. Time is on our side. The prophesied triumph of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is closer than ever. God will always protect His own, and none of them will be lost.

I want to congratulate all of you for your generosity and for your decision to always remain close to those who suffer and are in need, and with my congratulations, I send the gratitude of all at the Home of the Mother.

Once again, Happy Easter of Resurrection, and may our hope in the Risen Lord grow always. I bless you with all my heart.

Father Rafael Alonso Reymundo

## OUR MISSION

To raise funds and support the works of St. Mary's School and Orphanage for the handicapped, deaf, poor and abandoned children in southern India and for the missionary work of the Home of the Mother Catholic Order in Ecuador.

The children and families we serve are provided with clothing, food, education, shelter and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Offering love, motivation and educational opportunities, we seek to help children thrive and become self-sufficient young adults, and we support the elderly with dignity and needed assistance.

# Help the Helpless



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**SPECIAL FEATURE: Soup Kitchen News from Guayaquil**



Dear Help the Helpless Friends:

We would like to thank you in a special way for all the help you have given us for the soup kitchens in Ecuador. This year we worked in three soup kitchens in very marginalized areas of Guayaquil:

### **Sr. Clare Soup Kitchen: Trinitaria Island (In the south zone of Guayaquil)**

Here we work in collaboration with a missionary couple who have started a kind of "shelter house" for the youth. The couple gives school support and catechesis to children who are not attending school because of the pandemic. When government school support ended, the children were also given lunches.

### **Santos Niños Justo y Pastor: El Fortín**

Several young girls collaborate the work of this mission. They receive the children and give them catechesis and lunch. In addition to the 60+ children a day, on Saturdays there are 150 children. It is a precious mission. We are now preparing 20 children for Baptism and some parents for marriage.

### **San José: Flor de Bastión**

In the area of the San José soup kitchen, there are many problems due to gangs fighting for the sale of drugs. An impressive missionary, Patricia, is in charge of the mission. She attends to 120 children daily. She is incapable of saying no to any child, so the soup kitchen is growing. The Lord multiplies the food, so from what is left over, she prepares tubs and takes it to the young people who live by collecting recycling in the streets. Many children from this soup kitchen have also been Baptized and are preparing to receive Holy Communion.

On May 3 we will start a new soup kitchen, God willing! The opening of this new soup kitchen will be accompanied by the opening of a Blessed Sacrament chapel right next door, so the children will be able to make their daily visit to Jesus. We will start with 60 children, but with the possibility of expanding to 100 or more.

We are very happy with the functioning of these soup kitchens. Certainly: "Man does not live by bread alone," but the "material bread" in this case is being the Instrument that brings these children to the "true Bread of Heaven."

Thank you so very much for your continued generosity and support – because of you we are blessed to see the smiles of children. May the Lord fill you with joy!



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## An Easter Message from Father Robert Altier

Dear Friends of Help the Helpless,

One of the great mysteries of God's love for us is that He brings good out of evil. We have all experienced this many times in our own lives when something that is so horrible can, with time, be seen as a blessing. Of course, we can see this on the level of our salvation as well: out of the evil of sin, original sin as well as our own sins, God brought the great good of the Incarnation of His Son. The Incarnation is something beyond our wildest imagination. Recall that when the very evil king Ahab was doubting God, the Lord told him through the Prophet Isaiah to ask for a sign. The sign could be anything: "as high as the sky or as deep as the netherworld." Just ask yourself this question: if God gave you that opportunity, what would you ask for? Would you ever think of asking God to take on a human nature, be born of a woman, and live a human life among us? What is unthinkable to us is precisely what God did.

But then it becomes even greater. In our humanness, we sometimes struggle with believing that God loves us. We would somehow doubt that God becoming man was proof enough. Therefore, God decided that His Son would not only live a human life, but He would also die a human death. This death would not be a peaceful death, lying in old age surrounded by loved ones. No, His death would be the greatest injustice in the history of the world. His death would be humanity's sentence of condemnation of God Himself. To think that we mocked God, scourged Him, crowned Him with thorns, and nailed Him to a Cross. He accepted all of this to show us His love, and still we doubt. We have given God every reason to doubt our love for Him, but He has given us every reason not to doubt His love for us.

Thankfully, there was one person who never doubted. In those three days after the death of our Lord, the faith of the Church remained alive in only one person. The Apostles were afraid and locked themselves in an upper room. When they heard of the resurrection, they thought it was a tale. The holy women came to anoint the body of our Lord, so they clearly were not expecting Him to rise. Only our Blessed Lady had faith in the resurrection. Only she understood, at the time, the necessity of the crucifixion, but she looked forward to the great good God was going to bring from such a horrible evil. From the Cross comes the salvation of our souls; from the death of our Lord, comes the resurrection from the dead and the promise of eternal life.

From the greatest evil God brought about the greatest good. In the Church's Easter hymn, which is directed toward our Lady, it says: "Queen of Heaven rejoice, alleluia, for He Whom thou has merited to bear, alleluia, for (He) has risen as He said, alleluia." The versical says: "Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia, for the Lord is truly risen, alleluia." All Christian people rejoice in the resurrection because life is victorious over death, justice reigns over injustice, the greatest event in human history overshadows the worst event in human history, the greatest good conquers the greatest evil. As wonderful as this is for all of us, no one has more cause for rejoicing than our Lady. Not only is her Son alive, so are the rest of her children. How grateful we must be to God for His love and to our Lady for her faith and her love.

What glorious mysteries we are privileged to celebrate in these blessed days! The one I like to think about the most is the faith of one extraordinary woman, the only person on earth who had faith that Jesus would rise from the dead. Our faith builds on hers. Your faith and your love have brought about a great good for people who were in some of the worst conditions. You have helped to raise them from their circumstances, and you have given them the grace to experience true Christian charity. Hopefully, having experienced the love of God's people, they will be able to see it as a reflection and extension of the love God has for them.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Help the Helpless, and on behalf of all those who benefit from your great charity, I thank you all and wish you and your families a most blessed Easter. The Lord is truly risen, alleluia!

God bless you,  
Fr. Robert J. Altier  
President of Help the Helpless