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## SPECIAL NEEDS

### Ecuador—Support for family in Chone—\$3,000

Paul, Sandra, and their four children lost everything to a catastrophic flood that swept through their town in March. We are raising money to restart their business after it was all ruined. Read more on pages 3 and 5.

### Ecuador—Installation of ceilings and fans in school classrooms—\$2,400

Four of the classrooms at the school in Guayaquil have no ceilings. This project funds the costs of materials and labor to build ceilings (\$2000) as well as install fans (\$400) as the temperature rises to over 100°F.

### India—Purchase of new water purifier for the school—\$9,375

The current water purifier at St. Mary's is outdated and unreliable. Continuing to use it poses severe health risks for the students. The project covers the costs of purchasing and installing a new purifier.



*Open the camera app on any smartphone to scan this QR code and support our 2024 Summer Special Needs! You can also visit [www.helpthehelpless.com/projects](http://www.helpthehelpless.com/projects)*

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# Help the Helpless



Summer Newsletter

August 2024



## Message from Father Rafael

Dear Friends and Benefactors of Help the Helpless,

It is a pleasure to write you these few lines for your Summer Newsletter. I want to express my immense gratitude to all of you. The Sisters in Ecuador have just begun a new school year, and they are so happy with all the help they are receiving, thanks to all of you. They observe firsthand the effects of your generosity in the lives of all those who benefit from your help: 324 sponsored children, 222 sponsored families, and countless others.

My heart fills with joy when the Sisters tell me such beautiful stories of their experiences in Ecuador. They told me recently about a family of five who lost absolutely everything they had in the floods a few months ago. Before the floods came, the mother had wanted to change the mattresses, because they were in such bad condition that the springs would cut her daughter's face while she was sleeping. When their house flooded, they lost everything. But thanks to the donations from HTH, the Missionary Groups of the Home of the Mother were able to provide them with what they needed. And along with the material restoration, there has also been a spiritual restoration. This family has now been completely renewed in body and soul. They have received all the sacraments they lacked, and they never cease to bless God for this suffering that has become for them a great blessing.

Every day our hearts are filled with gratitude for all of you. We continue offering Mass for you on the 16th day of each month (in memory of Sr. Clare Crockett, who passed away in the earthquake on April 16, 2016). Our Lord alone knows how to repay you for what you have done out of love for Him. For some of you, it might seem that the help you provide for the Home of the Mother is like a drop of water in the ocean, but I can assure you that "for each drop of sweetness that one person gives, there is one less drop of bitterness in the world." (Mother Teresa)

I ask Our Lord and Our Most Blessed Mother to sustain you everyday in your good works so that one day you may enter fully into Their Hearts, and there you may be filled with all the sweetness of Heaven. So be it.  
I give my heartfelt blessing,

Father Rafael Alonso Reymundo  
(President, Home of the Mother)

## News from the Sisters in Playa Prieta, Ecuador



Commencement ceremony for graduates of Holy Family School

Dear HTH Benefactors,

How are you? We wanted to write to you to thank you for all your generosity and prayers during these last few months. Here, our school year ends in February, just before the rainy season. This past February, 23 students graduated from Holy Family School, and the majority of them have continued on to university, thanks be to God!

We just began our new school year in May, the month of Our Lady. This year, we have 457 students enrolled at Holy Family, several of whom are new. To celebrate Our Lady, each class prepared a special reception, either with a song, a poem, or a dance, etc. We brought an image of Our Lady of Fatima to each classroom, blessing the rooms with her presence. All of the children prayed a rosary every day. At the conclusion of the month, the sisters went with a group of 60 girls

on a pilgrimage to the Marian shrine at Cajas. It was a touching experience for all of them, and many came back with strong intentions to live a serious Christian life.

To live this serious Christian life, it is absolutely necessary to pray every day. However, we realized that there are many students who want to spend daily time with Our Lord, but simply don't know how to go about it. This is why we decided to start a weekly bulletin at Holy Family School with reflections on the Gospel. It has been a great help for our students to learn how to grow in their relationship with God. Our hope is that soon some of the older students will be able to write the reflections themselves and, in this way, help other young people grow in their relationship with Jesus.

Last, but certainly not least, we have the great joy of announcing the opening of a new Adoration Chapel in the parish in Riochico, where the Servant Brothers live. On the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, the bishop of our diocese will come to inaugurate the chapel. We know it is going to be an immense blessing for the entire community. "What great strength it gives to souls who love Jesus Christ to visit him frequently in the Blessed Sacrament." (Saint Alphonsus Liguori).

Thank you as always for your generosity. We are praying that the Lord blesses you with great abundance.

The Sisters from Playa Prieta

## News from the Sisters in Chone, Ecuador

Dear HTH friends and collaborators:

We have so much to share with you! You may have heard that we suffered from heavy torrential rains and flooding in Chone this past March. Floods are nothing new to us, because our drainage system is very poor. Even with light rain, the streets will flood. However, this was much worse, as it was raining for days at a time.

One morning we saw the water level rise so high that our entire courtyard was under water, even though it is quite high above the street. Thanks to God and our prayers, it didn't get in the convent, but it was very close. However, as you can imagine, others were not so lucky. Most of the houses in Chone were flooded, and many families lost most of their belongings. Some lost everything they owned. Such was the case of Paul, his wife Sandra, and their four children.

*Paul and Sandra's story is continued on page 5*





## HTH Board Visits Ecuador!

Three members of Help the Helpless (pictured left: **Teresa Taggart**, administrator and board member; **Jim Benyon**, board member; and **Emma Taggart**, digital media and marketing) visited our missions in Ecuador this summer, accompanied by Sisters from the Home of the Mother.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.”

There is no greater grace than being able to witness the truth of this verse firsthand. We can say with great certainty that our experiences visiting the communities in Ecuador was a time of great spiritual inspiration. What a gift to have seen the work of God in such a raw and moving environment. The four days that we spent there could have easily turned into four months. It was not even close to enough time to witness all of the life changing work the Sisters do everyday thanks to your generosity, to hear the stories of the people they minister to, and to experience the strength of Faith in all we encountered. We truly saw God in the face of so many people, and we experienced a joy unlike any other. The fires of the Holy Spirit burned so brightly in the communities of Ecuador, and we could see plainly His glow on the faces of the people. What a transformative experience, to witness to their strength and resilience and to see the suffering they live with daily, suffering that is overcome only with the grace of the Lord and the trust of a faithful soul.

Our first full day in Ecuador was spent in the city of Guayaquil, in the invasion zones of El Fortín and Flor de Bastión, areas of the city where the poorest of the poor have set up shacks and tents to live. Those of you who are currently sponsoring children and families in Ecuador might recognize the names of these areas, as a great many of our sponsored children and families live here.

Accompanied by Sisters from the community of the Home of the Mother in Guayaquil, we visited three schools, two soup kitchens, and a few of the sponsored families in the area. Our first stop was La Consolata School, where the Sisters teach. Currently, there are about 1,000 children enrolled in the school. Of these children, 106 are sponsored by Help the Helpless. We attended a beautiful all-school Mass and afterwards were able to meet many of the students and parents who receive tuition assistance from HTH. The sisters told us these families especially witness so much violence where they live, and some even in

their own homes. Gang violence pervades the area, and they live in constant fear of being attacked or killed. The gangs even recruit school children to join, and some of the children’s families are in the gangs. It is truly horrific, and yet you would never know it when speaking to them. On the face of each parent or child we spoke to was only the deepest look of joy. They have nothing of material importance, yet they have found everything in the Lord, and He has consoled them. It was beautiful to witness to it all!

The work that the Sisters do in Guayaquil is unbelievable. No matter where we went, we were met with joy and the most inspiring stories of faith and strength. From the smiles of the children who had so little, to the families who were faced with violence and destruction, they had all found their peace in the Lord and His providence.

We had a particularly moving experience in the community of Chone, where we visited a few families who were impacted by the floods you read about in the Sisters’ message (pages 2 and 5). One of these families was Paul, Sandra, and their four children. Although the Sisters had told us their story before meeting them, nothing could have prepared us for the beauty of their family and their absolute trust in Our Lord. Here was a family who had lost every single piece of material wealth they owned, and yet we saw Paul, with happy tears in his eyes, thank God for the flood, as it had brought the family back to Him. They are now active in the church and in the Home of the Mother, and they minister to their neighbors who have also lost everything. They truly see God in all, and they share His love with everyone they encounter.

*This story is continued on page four.*

A sponsored family member we visited with one of the Sisters



Sisters, Emma, Teresa, and sponsored children at the soup kitchen



Dish washing at one of the soup kitchens we visited

## HTH Board Visits Ecuador (continued)

After meeting them, the Sisters told us that they had brainstormed ways to be able to help the family, since they would accept nothing in donations besides the bare minimum for survival. One of these such ways was to hire Paul to assist the builders who were working on his house so he could receive some wages. However, when they approached him with this idea, he refused any payment and instead volunteered his time to help the builders with no payment! He told the Sisters that there were others who were worse off than he, and he would rather see the money donated to those in greater need. Here was this man who had truly nothing in the world, and yet he gave most selflessly and so joyfully of the only thing he could: his time. It brought tears to our eyes to see the devotion and beauty of this family! They place all their trust in the Lord, and He provides for them every day. There are still days where they don't know where their next meal is coming from. We heard about one of these days from Paul himself. When they realized they had no more food in the house, they did not despair but instead threw themselves on their knees to pray. Within an hour, one of the children's godmothers called to say she had some extra bread and hot chocolate, and she wanted to come over to share it with them! When she arrived, she saw the family had nothing to eat and immediately bought them groceries from a nearby store. What a beautiful thing to see how Our Lord works through his people. Trusting in Him is truly the answer to all our needs.



Paul, Sandra, their children, Emma, Teresa, Jim, and Sisters



**As was mentioned in the message from Chone (page 2), Paul and Sandra supported their family by selling a variety of items online. Their entire inventory (around 10,000USD worth) was swept away by the flood, and so Help the Helpless is raising funds so they can start up their business again. To donate, please scan the QR code or visit [www.helpthehelpless.org/project/ecuador-support-for-paul-and-sandra](http://www.helpthehelpless.org/project/ecuador-support-for-paul-and-sandra)**

The remainder of our visit was filled to the brim with heart wrenching stories like that of Paul and Sandra. We only wish we had the space to tell you about each and every one! No matter who we encountered or the sufferings they were undergoing, we saw the same expression on each face: that of the deepest of joys. Joy that can only come from an utter trust in the Lord.

This joy was no more evident than in the school of Sagrada Familia (the Holy Family) in Playa Prieta. Here we celebrated Mass with the 400 some students of the school. Afterwards, we were privileged to meet the teachers who work there. Teacher after teacher spoke so movingly about their experience, and it was clear to see that teaching is truly their vocation, not just their job. They are rooted so deeply in their Faith, and they are truly on fire with the Holy Spirit. What a great example for the young students they lead! To have these examples of fervent faith and trust in God every day is so inspiring. We were truly brought to tears by the witness of these teachers and the beauty of their faith. As Jim put it, "There's a certain spirit of joy and hopefulness that permeates this whole atmosphere, from the sisters and priests to the children, not only in the formal religion, but in their recreation, as well. It's palpable!"



Students at recess—Holy Family School

As we were soon to discover, those words defined the whole of our short but meaningful visit. We had never in our lives experienced so much joy. Even in the midst of the most horrible of circumstances, in places where many would have easily despaired, these people surrendered themselves completely to God and His Divine Providence. As long as they were close to Him, they had no fear. As we reflected on this trip and the graces which it brought us, we kept returning to the concept of Divine Inspiration. To inspire literally means to be breathed into, from the Latin in + spiro, and in a divine context, the breath of God can be none other than the Holy Spirit. Through your prayers and your selfless generosity, the Holy Spirit works miracles in Ecuador beyond our comprehension. You truly are helping Him in His evangelization, and for that, we cannot thank you enough.



Students with Jim at Holy Family School

May the deep and unending joy of our communities in Ecuador fill each and every one of your lives today and forever. God truly blesses you for the work you do in ways you may not even know. We are immensely grateful for you.

Thank you again and God Bless!  
Jim, Teresa, and Emma



Scan here for pictures of our visit!



## News from Chone (continued)

*Continued from page two:* We met Paul and Sandra days after the flood. In their neighborhood, the water reached a height of over 8 feet, and their one story house was completely swept away. They recounted to us how in just an hour, the water had risen so high that they lost all their personal belongings. Additionally, they lost their entire inventory of items for their online business (this is how Paul supports the family). Their inventory totaled to the equivalent of 10,000 USD.

When we came to visit them, we supported them with donations of food and clothing. Previously, they had been more lukewarm in their Faith, but with the occurrence of the flood, they began to see the grace of God in those who helped them. As soon as we met them, Paul asked us what they could do to be married in the Church. That was the beginning of our friendship with them. During these last two months, we have tried to help them materially as well as spiritually. We gave them a temporary place to live and everything they needed to get by. But the most beautiful thing has been their desire to really know God, to live in grace, and to baptize their four children. We quickly began to prepare them with intense catechism classes so that they could receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist and marriage. We are also giving instruction to the children so they can be baptized.

Their faith has grown immensely in the time we have been with them. They often say to us, "God took everything from us, everything material, but in this way He prepared us to know Him and be filled with His love. It is better to have suffered the flood because it led us back to God."

Blessed be God!

The Sisters in Chone

## News from the Sisters in Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

With joy we share with you again the details of the immense love the Heart of Jesus has for His little ones. This time we would like to tell you about an initiative that arose to help teenage boys, particularly those who come to our soup kitchen, Santos Justo y Pastor. We have seen that they are exposed to drugs and violence at such a young age, and as they grow older, the amount of bad influence only increases. Many of them are coerced with the promise of money into taking or selling drugs, or even to join the gangs themselves.

We saw that it would be good to motivate these young boys in some way so that they would not become disengaged from our mission, so we made 2 soccer teams with them: one dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the other dedicated to Our Mother. The coach of both teams is a young man who is currently receiving a university scholarship from Help the Helpless. He is also one of our former students from La Consolata School.

With some donations, we were able to buy the players some uniforms and sneakers, since they didn't have any. They practice with the coach every Saturday before the soup kitchen opens. Every practice starts with a prayer and a small catechesis lesson. They also have some rules they are expected to follow, for example: no swearing,



The two soccer teams along with the Brothers

*Continued on page six*

## News from Guayaquil (continued)



*Continued from page five:* no fighting amongst themselves, and no skipping Mass! On one of the sleeves of their jerseys is written, "I am clean; I play clean," to discourage them from drug use, which is so common among their peers. After practice, they go with the Servant Brothers and Priests to have a meeting and play a game before coming back for lunch.

We thank you enormously for all that you do for Jesus, who is present in a special way in these children. "What you did for the least of these, you did for Me."

May our Lord grant us one day to meet all of you in Heaven.  
The Sisters from Guayaquil

### Students in Guayaquil

## News from St. Mary's School, India

Dear Loving Friends and Benefactors,

My heartfelt greetings to you! How are you all? I hope this message finds you well. The entire St. Mary's family would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our generous benefactors for your unwavering support.

Thanks to the grace of our Lord Jesus and the blessings of our Founder, Rev. Fr. Antony Xavier, the St. Mary's Institutions are running smoothly. All of us - students, staff members, and parents - are safe and healthy. We are so grateful for your prayers and support. All the St. Mary's students have returned to school, since our new school year began in June. They have all received their uniforms and books for the academic year. They are overjoyed!

Regular activities such as day classes and evening sports have resumed. We are delighted to see the children actively participating in their academic activities and brightening St. Mary's with their presence. But most importantly, we have resumed morning Mass. Before each Mass, a teacher or student reads a short history of the Saint whose feast day it is, followed by a brief reflection by the priest.

I would like to share one of the most inspiring stories with you. One of our Deaf-Mute children, Ganasekaran Thamilselvan, participated this year in the First World Deaf Athletics Championship 2024 held

### Ganasekaran Thamilselvan



in Taipei, China. You might remember that he had previously qualified for the competitions in Brazil, but he was unable to attend because of visa issues. We are so proud that he represented us this year in China!

He participated in long jump and running, winning medals for both events (8th place for long jump and 5th place in the 4x100meter relay). Winners up to 8th place are eligible to participate in the upcoming Special Olympic events. We are incredibly proud of him, and we are grateful to all the benefactors for their support in his success. Next, he will be going to participate in the Asian Selection of Athletics, which will be held in Kerala. Please pray for his health and success in these next competitions!

Thank you so much, Help the Helpless, for your endless support and prayers. We are always praying for you.

Thanking you with warm regards,  
I.Mariaselvam - Administrator of St. Mary's School

### St Mary's Team at the Special Olympics

