

Note from Fr. Rafael

Dear Friends and HTH Benefactors,

We're drawing close to the Solemnity of Christmas, in which we celebrate the birth of the Son of God. Let us rejoice together for the gift we have received: **The Word Became Flesh.**

I never cease to recognize the great assistance that HTH gives to the poor and to the projects organized by the Home of the Mother. Thanks to the donations we've received from you these last 3 months, we have been able to cover a large part of the needs. I would like to highlight just a few of those many projects:

**Building of Homes** We constantly discover situations in which there are families living in miserable conditions. Thanks to the money given to us from HTH for the repair and re-construction of homes, 12 new families now have decent homes. Additionally, we finished the construction of 7 new homes and 7 bathrooms made out of reeds. Some of these families had been waiting for assistance from the government since the earthquake in 2016 while others are families sponsored by HTH donors.



**COVID Relief** Through the funds you donated, we have been supporting many families affected by COVID with food and other necessities. We have also covered the expenses of Sacred Family School, the school that many of the sponsored children attend. These funds helped with teachers' salaries, upkeep of the facility, textbooks for the students and so much more.

**Soup Kitchens** Currently in Guayaquil, we maintain 2 soup kitchens daily. We opened a 2nd location due to the pandemic and feed hundreds of people each week.

**Sponsorship** Thanks be to God, we continue with the sponsorships. Donors currently sponsor 154 families and 250 children in Ecuador. We don't know how to thank you all, how to show our gratitude for the help that you lend those who seek us. We look at you and at them. We all gaze upon a Merciful God and Father who embraces all of us and sends us His Divine Son for our salvation.

Merry Christmas. I bless you with all my whole heart,  
Fr. Rafael Alonso  
Founder and President of Home of the Mother

Note from Fr. Robert Altier

Dear Benefactors of Help the Helpless,

The season of Advent is intended to prepare us spiritually for the celebration of Christmas. With things shutting down and chaos building up, it appears that both our preparation for and our celebration of Christmas will be very different this year. On one hand, this is most unfortunate, but on the other hand, this could be a great blessing for us. When we consider how we have celebrated Christmas over the past number of decades, it seems to have become more and more secular. As such, our Christmas celebrations have gradually become less and less like the glorious but humble events that took place in Bethlehem.

Our circumstances this year might help us to reflect more on what our Lady and St. Joseph endured. There are some governors who are trying to forbid families from being together to celebrate Christmas; this can make us think of the situation of Mary and Joseph being turned away from the inn. With many people laid off and so many businesses closed, we may be forced into a more simple and humble celebration which can cause us to think about what are really the most important elements of our Lord's Incarnation and Nativity: the humility and charity of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

Initially, we may be saddened by the fact that we cannot celebrate Christmas in the manner to which we have grown accustomed, but if we can pray our way through this, I think we will find that God will give us an abundance of grace that will make this one of the best and most spiritual and holy Christmases we have had.

We are so grateful to all of you whose hearts are open to the poor and needy. Jesus comes to us in our needs, and you are being an extension of the love of our Lord by helping others in their needs. As we reflect on the generosity of our Lord and our Lady during this blessed time, the Board of Directors of Help the Helpless extends its thanks to you for your generosity. God bless you and your family in this holy season. Pray that our hearts may be always more and more conformed to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

God bless you,

Fr. Robert Altier

President of Help the Helpless

Help the Helpless Christmas Newsletter



Christmas, 2020

Special Needs

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

\*Ongoing COVID-19 Relief Fund in Ecuador

We are again requesting donations to offer temporary aid to families who are in need due to the economic effects of COVID-19. Many families are struggling to be able to provide food, to pay their children's tuition or pay for other daily living expenses due to the loss of jobs.

\*Ongoing COVID-19 Relief Fund in India

St. Mary's has provided aid to over 1,100 families who have been affected by COVID-19. As families continue to struggle, St. Mary's will continue to offer help to these families and any others who request help. These funds will provide immediate help to these families.

Inside This Issue

PG.2

Update from Chone, Ecuador, and Guayaquil, Ecuador

PG.3

Update from St. Mary's School in India

PG.4

Note from Fr. Rafael and Fr. Altier



Update from Chone, Ecuador

"We have come to adore Him." - Matthew 2:2

Dear Friends and Benefactors of HTH,

On this occasion from Chone, we don't want to write to tell you about all the material work we are realizing here because as you all know, thanks to your generosity, it is a great deal: family assistance, support for the children, evangelization, repairing and building of houses, etc. Rather, for this occasion, we've reserved something better.

We're writing to wish you a Merry Christmas, in a year that in our Archdiocese of Manabi, we are celebrating a special year dedicated to the Eucharist. Everything was planned to make it a Eucharistic year full of celebration, but the circumstances known by everyone have made this Eucharist year be lived out in a different way, causing some consequences that aren't so positive, especially with respect to the Eucharist.

For this reason, all of us, the Members of the Home of the Mother in Chone, whose mission is the Defense of the Eucharist, have put ourselves to work on the best mission: to make Jesus - present in the Eucharist - loved by all. So Our Lord has given us the great gift to be able to go throughout all the different zones of our Parish, knocking on every door to invite them to come to Mass on Sundays. We've been able to participate in the different Masses of the zones with the enthusiasm to bring back to life the faith of those who live in each zone. We can only say Blessed be God!!! He who gives us so much and allows us to serve Him, to love Him, and to adore Him.



This mission has been the same mission as the Star of Bethlehem - to be the light that guides the steps of so many people to the feet of Jesus who is alive, to be the light that marks where Jesus in the Eucharist can be found today. That way, like the 3 Eastern Kings, even though they came from a distant place, they found the Lord and they adored Him, recognizing that He who is alive in the Most Holy Eucharist should be the center of our lives.

All of us that form the Home of the Mother in Chone wish you a Merry and Holy Christmas and a year filled with the graces of God, so that we can fill them with the works of love for God and for those who are far from Him and far from His Holy Church. With all our affection and gratefulness,

The Servant Sisters in Chone, Ecuador

Right: All the Sisters and candidates in Ecuador, along with Fr. Rafael Alonso

Update from Guayaquil, Ecuador

Dear Friends from HTH,

Time flies! Again we find ourselves celebrating the Mystery of the infinite love of God who becomes a child, full of weakness, for love of us. He was born in poverty in order to show us the richness of humility. He was born weak in order to move our hearts toward love and compassion.

Here we can adore and admire this mystery, of the God-Child, of God who is poor, vulnerable, and weak. We can kneel before Him, present in the Eucharist, weak, defenseless, and vulnerable, and we can find Him present in the most needy of people.

In the midst of this particular situation with COVID, the sufferings of our children who receive scholarships and of the families we sponsor has increased. How many of them have lost the opportunity to study because the government wants to substitute in person schooling with virtual schooling. But, in these impoverished areas, it's an illusion. The majority of students abandon their studies or don't take care in doing them, in order to work to help out their families with basic needs. How many times we've visited families that haven't had anything to eat for a few days, or who have spent 15 days eating only the broth of bananas!

In the midst of so much suffering, the great comfort is to see that they don't rebel against God. They don't even complain, nor do they reject the hand of God that tests them. Rather, they are grateful to God who maintains them in existence and who uses you to show them His providential love.

They give thanks to God for you, because for them, you are the tender hand of God who takes care of them and provides food for them.

May this Christmas find us with a heart full of love and gratitude toward this God who is weak and strong, the eternal God and the God of all times. May Our Lord and Our Lady bless you all. - The Servant Sisters of Guayaquil



An Update from St. Mary's School in India

Dear loving friends and benefactors! Greetings! We wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2021!!! We are so grateful to you!

Thank you so much for your endless and unbounding support to St. Mary's for the successful running of the schools.

I hope you are safe in the name of our Saviour, Jesus. All St. Mary's children are safe in their homes. We have never seen such a tough situation in my lifetime. This lockdown and COVID-19 have made a huge difference in the lives of these people. We pray to God that all is well.

"And God is able to give more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause." 2 Corinthians 9:8

Usually in the month of December, we have a lot of celebrations at St. Mary's. All the children participate in our cultural programs and immensely enjoy them. We also celebrate the World Disabled Day and Founder's Day on December 3rd every year. On that day, we offer a special Mass and a very special lunch to the children. However, this year, since the school is closed due to the government restrictions from COVID, the children are missing these celebrations.

We are teaching the children through online classes using YouTube and Whatsapp. The response from the families is good. Children are submitting homework and assignments and show an interest in online classes. However, some of the children cannot take the online classes due to not having adequate devices or the internet. We have also issued books to the children to study if they do not have the internet.

We are able to see many of the children and parents when we offer the parental support meetings to give the families much needed food and other assistance. They have shared with us about their situations regarding unemployment, lack of getting basic needs, fears about COVID, lack of public transportation and so many others. With the support that you have offered to our COVID fund, we have been able to give support to over 1,100 families. These families offer their wishes, thanks and prayers for all of you who have offered a supportive hand during this difficult time.

During this time of closure, we have been able to perform some much needed maintenance on the school and hostel

buildings. We must also continue to pay our staff who conduct the online classes, maintain the institutions, guiding and supporting the children in their education and health and many other expenses, so we thank you for your continued support of St. Mary's and your adopted children. All this is for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though we have been greatly affected economically, we do these things in the name of our Loving Lord Jesus. God knows how to fulfill our needs through the good-hearted people like you with your prayers and help.

St. Mary's always prays for all of you who make up Help the Helpless.

Please pray for us. We love you and thank you.

Once again, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2021.

With warm regards,

I.MariaSelvam



Food staples given to the families and students who have been affected by COVID.



One of the special needs students who came to the meeting at St. Mary's to receive food and assistance due to COVID.