

Dear Friends

That lovely time of Thanksgiving is upon us once again. During this season my thoughts always turn to St. Joan of Arc where Thanksgiving was always so wonderful. People expressed their gratitude to God for His blessings in so many different ways. It is the one time of year when I really miss St. Joan of Arc.

Well this year, Thanksgiving came to Peru a few weeks in advance in a rather surprising way. On November 6, Msgr. McGraw, Ed and Betty Heemskerck, founders of the Ministry of the Good Shepherd, Jerry Fickel, president, and two long time parishioners, Carole Gulisano and Shirley Zimmerman arrived here at our mission. On Thursday night they prepared Thanksgiving dinner having brought some of the goodies not available here with them. So, at 6:00 p.m. we sat down to Thanksgiving dinner and gave thanks for all those in the United States who make so many of our ministries possible. What a surprise!!!!



Saint Joan of Arc parishioners with Sister Immaculata in Alto Trujillo, Peru

And what do I give thanks for in this year 2012?

- That Peru is slowly emerging from the extreme poverty in which it has long existed and that "inclusion" is the theme of our present government.
- That last week, here in Alto Trujillo a sewerage system was finally completed and we are making connections, giving dignity to people.
- That, the 20 Care Centers that we operate are having a good year. We are providing an invaluable service to women who need to work to get out of the extreme poverty in which they live.
- That 33 special children are having a good year in Santo Toribio School and that presently the government is putting a large extension to the school to include the older teenager.
- That so many children benefit daily from the library.
- That 21 students are studying higher level education and over 325 teenagers and adults are availing of the Technical Educational Center.
- That the mission in the Andes continues to flourish.
- That, working together with the pastor and the other pastoral centers in this huge parish, we continue to struggle to bring about the Reign of God, based on his Word and strengthened by the sacraments.

This Thanksgiving I give thanks to God for the many people who make all this possible. My "early Thanksgiving visitors" experienced the appreciation and gratitude of the people for what happens here.

May all of you and your families be truly blessed this season.

Gratefully,

Sr. Immaculata Murphy



Thanksgiving Feast

For all those who have continued to support us, we say thank you for your generosity. For those of you who might be thinking of making a donation at this time, we say thank you in advance. Your ongoing help is crucial to the Sisters work with the poor. As always, 100% of your donation goes to Sister and her work in Peru.

Shirley Zimmerman, traveler to Peru

I've been to Peru! I say it again and again and still find that hard to believe. What a blessing to have walked with Sr. Immaculata through the barrios in Alto Trujillo and see the smiling faces of the children and hear the witness of the Care Mothers whose lives have been so changed by the Ministry of the Good Shepherd through the mind, heart and holy hands of Sr. Immaculata. People with so little have such joy. The welcoming and love poured out by all we met at the school for mentally and physically challenged at Santo Toribio, the home for recovering alcoholic and drug abusers, the bakeries, workshops, the beautiful people in Mache and the very special Sisters of Mercy that work with Sr. Immaculata.



Shirley observes student seamstress

Although everything was awesome, in reflection, celebration of Mass at San Jose in Alto Trujillo was a highlight. The little Church was filled, music was vibrant, everyone participated. Over the sanctuary was a banner which read, Welcome Our American Brothers. Afterward there was fellowship outside the Church with



Welcoming Sign

music and dancing and entertainment. The beautiful dancers honored us (the American brothers) by inviting us to dance with them, and oh yes, my birthday occurred on that day and as is their custom, birthday people are called to the Sanctuary and receive a candle, song and applause. It was a birthday celebration never to be forgotten.



Dancers

And finally, although my heart was touched so many times, on one of the visits to the Care homes in Alto Trujillo, a young twelve year old girl whose English was so perfected delightedly asked me in English, "How are you?" I answered that I was fine and asked in return "How are you?". She answered with a huge smile, "I am happy!" That is the story of Sister's work there. I am happy too!

Carole Gulisano, visitor to Peru

Years ago a young Sister Immaculata touched my heart and called me to a deeper faith. When she was called away, I was saddened. Last month, twenty five years later, I visited Sister in Alto Trujillo, Peru. I was in awe of all the good work done by her and her fellow Sisters of Mercy: Angelica, Aurea, Dora, Catalina, Calixta, Erica, Juanita, and Sarah. The service of these beautiful sisters and the gratitude of the people were mind boggling. The people thanked us and made us feel as if we alone made this ministry possible. The care mother's prepared us a lavish dinner from their earnings. We were hugged, entertained with dance and song, prayed for, and given handmade gifts. Everyone expressed their sincere thanks to the Ministry of the Good Shepherd.



Monsignor McGraw and Carole receiving a gift

Two moments stand out, really touching my heart:

- While visiting the library in San Jose, Alto Trujillo, I spotted a young boy writing away. Looking closer I realized he was copying a book about the solar system, including the illustrations. Sister explained that they cannot take the books home. I asked her to keep an eye on that gentle soul. Will she? You bet she will!



Women from Ancush

- The second moment was in the mountain town of Mache. After Mass we were entertained and given gifts of hand knitted scarves by women from the town of Ancush, who came via a several hour walk. I have always been a hugger, so loving these people back was easy, even though I was lost without words. They understood.

Where the sisters work is not the places tourists go, but my visit to Peru was exciting, exhilarating, tiring and a wonderful gift from God. Now I know why Sister Immaculata had to leave, the people of Peru were waiting for her.