The Peruvian Journal

By Kathleen Neely, osu

Muquiyauyo-Jauja, Peru

Blessings of the New Year to each and every one!

Presently I am writing this as we are preparing for Christmas. As it is for all of you, this month of December is a very busy month. We just finished First Communion in the three towns where we serve: Huaripampa, Muquiyauyo and Muqui. Forty three children received Jesus into their hearts for the first time.

December is also the end of the school year and our summer vacation begins. Yuli and Rocío are finishing classes with their students in the midst of exams and lots of paperwork. Tomorrow Sue will have a prayer service with the children in one of the schools here. I am helping to prepare a "Family Congress" for the people in the seven parishes of our Deanery, and all four of us are participating in the "Posadas." Last Advent, the "Posadas" were a first for our people and they participated well each evening. This year, too, as we walk through the streets singing Christmas carols, we will have "Mary and Joseph" leading us as Joseph asks for lodging. Again we have the promise of a burro, so the scene will be complete.

Rocío has recuperated very well from her fractured ankle, but she has an added challenge now. Passing a national examination for teachers, she has the right to obtain a permanent teaching assignment where they are available. The high school where she is presently teaching does not have an opening for a permanent position, so she must look elsewhere. She has truly spent all of her "free time" visiting the schools which have these positions available.

While the exam is an effort to better the quality of education by demanding greater preparation on the part of the teachers, it leaves the door open for a lot of unhealthy competition among the teachers within the system and throughout the entire department of education. Corruption, as in any other area of the government, reigns and the need for jobs has forced many teachers to buy their way through the exam or into the desired teaching position.

Because of the need to find the open positions, many teachers are forced to leave their classrooms (and their students), thus creating huge gaps in the education process for this school year. And all of this happens when teachers are supposed to be finishing the school year, finalizing exams, grades, and end-of-the-year documentation. One has to seriously question such efforts to "better the quality of education."

Once again, we thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Health and well being to each and every one,

~ Sisters Yuli, Sue, and Kathy