



# THE PERUVIAN JOURNAL

## Elections

The month began with the frantic suspense of the mayoral elections. There were major concerns about the process, due in part to past experiences of fraud.

In Carmen de la Legua there were 12 candidates for mayor. Since the late eighties the influence and existence of political parties has diminished. There had been growing disillusionment regarding their performance in the past. People began, then, to create political movements. It was a time of new fervor. However, the political groupings or movements do not have the seriousness of the political parties nor the capacity to formulate projects and plans on which to govern. They also lack stability. They can change dramatically from one election to the next.

This was reflected in the elections generally, and especially in Carmen de la Legua. Two of the leading candidates represented those movements. One had been in power in our district and in Callao for the past 15 years and was operated by a mafia of corruption, drugs, and violence.

They were especially strong in Carmen de la Legua and linked with the mayoral governance of Callao.

The second candidate is a neighbor of ours. He lives three houses down from us and is a graduate from our school. A fairly quiet person, but very well-liked, Daniel Lecca's campaign gained momentum in the weeks prior to the elections. He and the people with him had to stand off threats that were accompanied with the showing of guns, rocks thrown at their home, spying and more. Truthfully, I did not believe that he could win.

But on election day the people manifested their desire for a change in electing Daniel by a very slight margin. The opposition challenged the voting count, but in the end Daniel won. However, the final statement from the official elections office is still to be heard.

In Lima the situation was equally interesting and tense. As was mentioned in the previous Peruvian Journal, the real contest was between two women. This is a first for Lima. Lourdes Flores represents one of the few remaining political parties, and one that tends toward the right and with a history of giving political favors. The second candidate represents a moderate left, a woman who had been the National Coordinator of Human Rights, and responsible for the Department for Women during the interim government of Paniagua (who replaced Fujimori when the latter fled Peru), one of the more honest of presidents. Susana Villarán has been involved in Christian communities of professional people and is strongly committed to justice and respect for human rights.

The final count still is not in for this election as many of the votes were challenged. But it looks like Susanna will be the next mayor for Lima, but only by a slight margin.

Both of these elections represent the possibility of major positive challenges both locally and on the level of the capital city. We are hopeful.

I neglected to mention Muquiyauyo. The new mayor is a person who was mayor previously for two terms and will be returning to the municipality in January. It seems he won by a fairly large margin.

## 475 anniversary

We have been meeting to plan for the celebration of the 475 anniversary together with other Ursuline congregations in Peru. We have prepared reflection papers for the associates, for ourselves (religious), and for the teachers who work in Ursuline schools or with us in ministry.

It will be a two-day celebration. The first day will be a meeting with teachers from all the Ursuline schools