



# THE PERUVIAN JOURNAL

It is hard to believe that the year is coming to an end. As you know our school year closes in December, and because of the early semester break due to the swine flu, classes may be prolonged beyond Christmas. Not good news for teachers or students.

As we continue to be promoters or sponsors for our school in Carmen de la Legua, we try to participate in the significant activities of the school. This year we have taken as a theme, "As Angela the missionary, we strive to be followers of Christ." The theme builds on the charism of Angela while at the same time trying to put into practice the principles of "**Aparecida**," the document that came from the Latin American bishops' conference held in Brazil in 2007. The spirit of **Aparecida** invites us to renew our commitment to some of the earlier statements of the Latin American church that clearly expressed an option for the poor. Those teachings had us rooted in the method of "see, judge, act" as outlined in the documents of Puebla and Medellin.

In **Aparecida** we are invited once again to identify ourselves with the really poor whose face reveals to us the face of Christ. The emphasis on discipleship has us turn to the Christ as the one in our midst and with whom we are in communion. Being missionary and disciple are presented as **permanent** tasks for all of us in the church, not just for the "chosen." Our lives are to be in mission with the Christ on a daily basis. There no longer is the idea of missionary as one who goes to distant or "unchurched" lands.

Within the school context the teachers along with the students and parents have all participated in a retreat wherein the themes of discipleship and missionary have been developed. A painted, typical cross was given to each family, and they were asked to pray together in family with the cross as their reminder. We have had wonderful participation by both students and parents.

The climax of the year was the presentation of Jesus Christ Superstar for the anniversary of the school.

This was a real challenge, as our students are not accustomed to the discipline of putting on a play, much less a musical. It was hard for "Jesus" (a tall lanky kid with frizzy hair) to really get into the part, to fall in love with Mary Magdalene, to get angry in the temple scene, and to really express the feelings of a real Jesus. But, as miracles would happen, even in Carmen de la Legua, within the last week of rehearsals, the students of Saint Angela Merici School transformed the musical into a mission. It was theirs, and they became very proud of it. All four of us were present to witness the effort.

## Plant a Tree

One of the other characteristics of **Aparecida** is the context into which the church's teaching responds to climate change, destruction of the environment, and indifference toward the works of creation. We have described on other occasions the numerous feasts in which a central activity is tying gifts to a tree that has been cut down and then placed into a cement support so as to be the center of the evening celebration. People take turns whacking at the tree to make it fall so that the gifts can be grabbed from the tree. Whoever cuts down the tree becomes the host of next year's celebration.

In other parts of Peru this tree cutting event is once a year and usually for Mardi Gras or some similar celebration. In our area in the mountains it is all too frequent and may accompany even the simplest and most insignificant of celebrations.

The custom is so widespread that there is a real danger to the forestry in the area. So one of the projects in the diocese and consequently in our area is called "plant a tree." It is slow in capturing the interest of the people, but the project has great possibilities for re-forestation and returning to the area the nurseries that are necessary to put a balance in the environment.

There is a saying which goes something like this:



“Blessed is the one who plants a tree in whose shade she will never rest.” Planting trees is not only restoring to the eco-system a balance of carbon dioxide and oxygen, it is also saying “yes” to life, to the on-going work of creation of which all of us are a part. It is the responsibility we have to other generations for a healthy planet.

### **Visitors**

We continue to enjoy visitors to our house in Muquiayuyo. The Ursulines of the Roman Union from a village about an hour away came for lunch and laughter. It was a delightful afternoon. They helped us get Skype installed on our computer now that we once again have internet.

Carol, with two of our associates, joined us for a weekend. Carol introduced some of our friends to Healing Touch, an energy medicine technique. We are awaiting her return visit to really take the course and begin to use it with our people.

By the time you receive this, Advent will be upon us. And so we wish you a very peaceful and joyful Advent, aware that among us some will be journeying home, and others will be preparing for another journey, down Frankfort Ave to Sacred Heart Village. We have something in common with the Bethlehem travelers. May we walk with one another knowing that wherever we are, there is also the Christ.

With love,

Yuli, Kathy, Sue