



THE PERUVIAN JOURNAL

A year later

It has been a year this month since we moved to Muquiyauyo. Many have asked what we have accomplished, if we are making progress, what are the changes we have made.

Even the questions are uncomfortable, not to mention the answers. How do you explain being in a place a year with missionary zeal and spirit, and still accomplish nothing? How do you explain, "We are still learning. We need more time to get to know the people"?

But this is true. We have built no schools, we have organized no youth programs, and we don't even have a year's plan, much less a five year one.

We are still learning. We are still getting to know the culture and life of the people. We are still walking the streets saying "hello."

We are also still trying to find ways to patch the leaks in the roof and keep little critters from entering the open space between the ceiling and the tin roof just above.

(Honestly, and sometimes embarrassingly maintenance consumes a good deal of our time.)

Being connected

And among the "still doing" is our effort to be connected to the organizations and groups that are a part of our area. Our connection with the Ursulines of the Roman Union in the diocese remains a true support for us. And Yuli, who was elected vice-president of the diocesan Conference of Religious, is very involved in planning programs for the religious and lay leaders in the diocese and in the regional Conference as well.

Kathy has been working with a group of women whose prior task was to raise money to build the

church, and who now are trying to equip our parish hall with tables, bookcases and benches so that the children and youth have an adequate space for gatherings.

Sue has been doing some facilitation for other religious communities in Lima, in the States, and for the Central American-South American- Caribbean regional unit of another religious community.

We know that our efforts are slim if we are not connected with other groups and organizations from whom we learn and with whom we share.

Another feast

Who is Saint James? That is the question that the celebrant addressed to the small group gathered for liturgy on the vigil of that feast. There was a noticeable hesitancy as the answers were spoken in barely a whisper. Some thought he was a farmer and would bless the new crops. Others believed he was an evangelist. No one was completely sure. Yet the feast of Saint James is one of the biggest in the town. There are days of processions and celebrations, with various groups dancing through the streets to the music of a small orchestra. The ritual is clear to everyone but us!

A dance competition follows a little later and people come from neighboring villages and even from Lima to watch. And each day when you think this is the last of the activities, another group appears and the celebrating begins again.

We have still to learn the why of the big celebration and how it came to be so important to our people.



We have still to learn the why of many things, even after a year. But certainly learning is a big part of our lives in Muquiyauyo.

Sister Sue