

Hello everyone

Well, winter's ended here with a bang. We went from one day with 2-3 layers of clothing to the next with just one, or less if possible! It's over 30 ° daily now and the air conditioners are blasting away. The wonderful thing the fierce cold seems to have done is help the national tree of Paraguay, the Lapacho, flower specially beautifully this year. They are ice cream pink and all over the city now.

Thank you for your prayers for safety and success for **Mission Paraguay 2009** and the volunteers visits. The groups from England and Ireland gave their absolute best: in the urban areas with sewing and children's work; in the arid, indigenous Chaco building a church combined with sewing and children's activities ('it was like a party', said the pastor's wife); and painting, children's and youth activities in the western city of Concepción. On their last day sightseeing in Asunción, the August group 'bumped into' President Lugo. He chatted to them, reminiscing about his time in Ireland in the 1980s, and offered them a tour of the government palace. Those with internet can track the activities of the Irish group on this site

www.stcanice.org/News%20from%20Paraguay%202009.html. Apart from this accolade, what was especially good this year was the interaction between the volunteers and more members of the Paraguayan church. Next year there are plans for the groups to stay in the diocesan centre so the relationships will get even closer.



The freezing cold pursued us to Buenos Aires for our **holiday** but **prayers were answered**: every time we had a day out or special event, the sun shone. Tango is a must in that city and we saw it. Salta, reputedly the most beautiful city in Argentina and surrounded by hills, didn't disappoint. We ate *tamales* (maize 'pasties') in an Indian mountain village and walked in the Andean foothills. The weakest link in my planning faded as we caught successive busses which got us to Brazil in record time. God blessed us abundantly and all returned refreshed and relaxed.

Work continues on the **diocesan library**. We've worked out that the library last stopped working properly in the 1960s. The room used to look totally dead with a dark varnished table and smelly, dusty books. In another week we'll have the table stripped and varnished and a beautiful new window to let in more light. Two girls who work as cleaners in the school (the sisters who spend 3 hours commuting from the country) are using their down time for a few hours over the next fortnight. They are helping to get the library stationery systems organized ready for the launch of the mobile reading scheme for full lending next year. **I'd so value your prayers** that enthusiasm for the scheme, designed to 'grow' young Christian leaders, would snowball and that I would be able to keep up with lending at the same time as establishing two sewing workshops in country areas.

The difficult credit-crunch times are having their effect on mission organizations. I'm so grateful to the churches and individuals who have kept up or increased support for me and for the generosity of Mission Paraguay team members and their churches who brought so much blessing and hope to Paraguay.

With love and God bless, Caroline