



Pat Blanchard
CMS mission partner
Peru

Pat was an energetic coordinator of the Diocese of Peru's programme of social outreach, with its many projects. She now focuses on the ministry of her own church of Jesús el Nazareno in Pamplona Alta, Lima, and was ordained deacon to its congregation in November 2006. Much more information about some of the projects Pat is involved in, including Shalom which works with children with disabilities, can be found at: www.patinperulatest.blogspot.com

Link Letter No.3 May 2013

Dear friends,

I seem always to start recent link letters apologising for time lapsed... and this is no exception! I have been waiting to write with the good news that we have started the Shalom building project – but we haven't. The month of May has now begun and we are still tied up in preparing paperwork to present to the local government for planning permission. The last two months have been full of frustrations and red tape but it is important that we do things correctly. Although most people build their houses without permission, as we want to progress in turning Shalom into a recognisable rehabilitation centre we need all the government permissions and authorisations. We are also still fundraising to complete the budget needed for the whole four storeys.

Shalom life

By the time this letter gets through the presses, there may be some good news but I decided not to wait any longer as a link letter is well overdue. In the meantime Shalom continues with all the therapies and activities as normal, although it is very cramped in the rented premises across the road and we are not able to do so much craft and art work. We currently have 69 children

in therapies and the youth come along to the Friday afternoon craft session; hopefully this month we will offer free classes for those suffering with disabilities – karate, football and dance, all taking place within a local park.

We are also a bit famous as a national television programme ran a feature on children with disabilities and actually came to film in Shalom last week. The feature aired on Saturday evening and many people saw it. The three children followed all have connections with Shalom – one was Josselin who you may remember from her baptism and birthday celebrations last year. Shalom is also becoming



The Shalom service in a local park on Palm Sunday

known within other circles and we have been asked to go to Ica in November to do screening and evaluations for children with Down syndrome.

Our therapists will do two days of evaluations and talks to around 60 families with the aim to suggest how best this community – and those with other disabilities – can be seen as currently there are no specialist therapies within the area. Some parents bring children four hours to Lima each week for therapies. The

Anglican Church in Juliaca is also becoming involved in work with the disabled. Rev Luis Vizcarra has started a small project with a physical therapist who sees children once a week. During our Diocesan Synod last month, he was able to visit Shalom and gain more insight into developing an integral programme. It is hoped that Diocesan Dr Cooper and myself can go to Juliaca in August to give further consultation and advice.

A couple of weeks ago I was invited to go to Arequipa with a NGO group to attend a strategic planning health conference, which was very encouraging and inspiring. It was great working with community leaders and analysing their needs and resources, and collaborating on a plan for future development. It is very encouraging how God is opening up many new ways in which we can share experiences with others and in turn help to define and consider new ideas in Shalom once we have more space and facilities.

Now to fill in some earlier gaps...

My brief visit to the UK at the beginning of the year was lovely; the first two weeks went quite slowly and I managed to have great family time with my new great niece, Chloe, who was born at the end of



With my great niece Chloe

December and my mother who is in good health. I was also able to catch up with friends from my home church and get some old friends involved there – I spent the weekend with one old teaching friend who was ill with cancer but sadly she died last month.

Returning to Peru in February we had a four-day Diocesan clergy retreat – me and 31 men! I was then fell ill with bronchitis before entering March, which was busy with Holy Week and Easter celebrations. Open air services in local parks for Palm Sunday began a week of dividing ministry in Shalom and Nazareno churches

2012 reflections

As 2012 finished, we were left wondering where the year had gone and what had been accomplished. With the tiredness from Christmas activities closing the year and a prayer vigil



The Arequipa community where strategic health planning was held

looking forward, no one was aware how the year was to begin – with funerals for two young girls from the community and former Sunday school participants. They were killed by their father who then killed himself. Since that terrible sadness, death has been a constant feature this year with the church responding by accompanying church members and the community in their grief.

It seems like each week news reaches me of a tragic death: the mother of a girl with Down syndrome died suddenly; two men killed in road traffic accidents; several women from Nazareno congregation losing their mothers. These sad events have made me realise how precarious life is and how important it is to share faith and the plan of salvation. Many people here have a strong faith in God through their Roman Catholic background but often lack that personal relationship with a Saviour on a daily basis. Yes, we can trust in a merciful God but we need to respond in faith on a personal level.

Youth life

Despite the rapid passing of 2012, on reflection many people had come to faith or grown in their faith during the year, especially the young people in Jesus El Nazareno church. Winning the football cup and winning the talent show were achievements great in themselves but seeing the youth pray, and have such a hunger for God's word that they did fundraising activities to raise money to buy bibles, was uplifting; also, seeing once timid youth lead prayer and have great ideas of how to encourage others was inspiring. We had baptisms and confirmations which were joyous celebrations of real faith and commitment – these were mainly young people but one lady was aged 85, the oldest person Bishop William had ever confirmed he told us later!



Junior and Julio, two of the young people from Shalom, helping organise a local government activity



Confirmations in Nazareno at the end of 2012, with youth leaders and Elvira, our oldest confirmante

Men's group

With the input of Deacon Marco Gomez a men's group was started last year and now we have four men who regularly meet with Marco and are present in church with their wives and family. One is Faustin, the husband of faithful Etelvina – my right hand woman. God has answered her prayers and ours. A couple of weeks ago, Marco organised a men's breakfast; the numbers were perhaps not as had hoped but those who came were blessed and God is working amongst the men.

Valentine's Day

For Valentine's Day we had a special service that included the renovation of marriage vows, with eight couples coming along – quite an achievement! Please pray

that we can continue to encourage these couples, especially the men. This next week is Mother's Day and we have a special tea organised in Nazareno and a celebration in Shalom. Pray that we can use these activities to encourage and evangelise.

Training and equipping

Our emphasis this year is to train and equip core leaders in Nazareno to serve in the church and in mission. We have started regular Sunday evening services within the community of Senor de Los Milagros, Marco and I splitting alternately to lead simultaneous services. We are training up lay people to accompany us and help in the services, and also get to know the people and share their faith with them. We had our first leadership training session last week; please pray because it is still a struggle to get people to commit to midweek meetings.

Today my readings included Psalm 35, which speaks of the desert and parched land rejoicing and blossoming. This is what I pray for Pamplona, the dry hillsides around the churches, especially those who lack that living relationship with Jesus – that they would be touched and filled, especially those experiencing grief, sickness and other struggles, especially disabilities. And that those who know the Lord will step up and be equipped to sow seed and bring in the harvest.

In March we reinitiated the pre-school early stimulation classes in the mornings run by Lizeth the psychologist. There are four children who come along, three with Down syndrome and one with autism. It is a pilot project so pray that we will be able to develop this service to more children during the year.

Pray for:

Shalom:

- The building permission to be granted for Shalom and work to start very soon
- Wisdom and patience as building starts and good coordination with the work team
- Remaining funds to be obtained
- The staff – Luisa, Ruth, Lizeth, Luis and Liseth
- Ica and Juliaca projects and for other opportunities to share experiences
- Developing new plans in Shalom for expansion and additional activities.

Nazareno:

- Rev Marco leading the men's group; for key members Faustin, Genaro and Jose Maria
- The youth leaders Santiago, Karla, Gerson, Melany, Jenny and Beatriz
- The couples ministry, Beatriz and Jose Maria, Etelvina and Faustin, and Ena and Genaro
- The community of Senor de los Milagros, for real faith to grow in each person assisting and seeking
- For those recently bereaved, that God would comfort and strengthen them and give them hope.

Many thanks for support and prayers

Pat

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Church Mission Society

Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ Tel: 01865 787400 Fax: 01865 776375
Email: info@cms-uk.org www.cms-uk.org Registered Charity Number 1131655