



Pat in Perú



Dear Friends

May 2008

Apologies for the delay in getting news to you. I have been updating the blog but the last couple of months have flown by – that always seems to be my excuse! Here in Peru winter has arrived rather abruptly and am having to find warmer clothes and re-sort the wardrobe. Sunday saw the first overcast day and today is the same. Please pray that we shall not have such a harsh winter as last year, the situation is so difficult for many people in the shanty towns with inadequate housing. I am looking forward to coming back to the UK in a couple of months and hope to see some of you there. As I mentioned I will be at New Wine from 26th July so if you will be there as a church please make contact via the SAMS stall in the market place and leave a message.

This weekend is rather busy with Pentecost services and also celebrating Mother's Day here. On Saturday we have a full day of activities with Shalom, the disabled ministry, anticuchos (cow's heart), bazaar, selling other food and face painting with a service and presentations by some of the children. I really want to praise God for the great blessings we are seeing in Shalom. These last couple of months have been so encouraging in the ministry. In February we started a Sunday morning service and we now have over 30 attending and the space within the centre is too small. Mothers come with their children and some local neighbours also. Many of the mum's said they feel able to come along because the children are included; they play their instruments and join in. In other churches they have felt excluded because people complain about their special needs children who are not silent in the services! We also have a Sunday school class following the service and we have several in preparation for baptism and first communion, both mums and children. Luisa does a great job in the mornings with the very young children and in the afternoons coordinates those coming in for their therapies. Lourdes, Lourdes and Jesus are our 3 therapists and Ruth comes in once a week to oversee the professional side of the work, checking on therapy programs and activities for each child according to their disability.

I go two or three afternoons a week and am able to chat to the mums and pray with them and on Fridays I teach crafts; we have had such wonderful times together. Shalom has become a place where the families can come and feel accepted and welcomed without discrimination. The acceptance of children and adults with disabilities is not good within Peruvian society, there is a lot of shame and rejection and misunderstanding through ignorance and lack of integration.

We have not made much progress with finding a place for the ministry. The houses we have looked at are not adequate and would need a lot of adapting. I am praying that we shall be able to find some land and build something purpose-built for the needs of those with disabilities. Please continue to join us in prayer for this.

The work at Jesus El Nazareno continues to develop especially with the youth and children. I am trying to delegate more and rely on them, especially as we now also have the ministries in Shalom. I would like to see more integration with the members from Nazareno with Shalom, several have visited on Sunday mornings and hopefully on Saturday they will attend the activity. On Good Friday we had our walk from Nazareno down to Shalom and we gathered quite a crowd from the two churches. The women's group is going strong; last Saturday 9 of us went to the AMA (Anglican Women's) retreat and joined others from the different churches for a day of teaching and encouragement. The sewing groups are also busy with orders; Jean is away this month so I am doing a bit more coordinating on that. Pray for all the women involved and also those who sell items in the United States and in the UK, to enable the sustainability of the work.

The Bishop has now returned to Peru and although delicate in health he is getting back into things here slowly. During the recent Diocesan Synod I was elected to form part of a nominating committee to find an assistant Bishop, please pray for us as we meet to discern and consider possible candidates. We continue to have our regular deanery meeting for the south of Lima and last Friday we met in Nazareno to pray and share together. Pray for those who will cover the services in my absence. We are also planning a joint confirmation service for 8th June in Pamplona; due to the Bishop's illness and then absence it has been decided to have a confirmation celebration together before he returns to the UK in June to attend some conferences.

I have quite a few candidates so please pray for their preparation and the service, for a real blessing and outpouring of the Spirit in their lives.

During April I suffered from ill health quite a bit, first some virus and then stomach problems which had me in the clinic for an investigation. They have now put me on a special diet, no coffee, no chocolate (sob, sob!!) and other spices and things. I am having to cook more at home which is not my scene really but I am managing OK, although today I am not too well, hence I have time to type this letter!! Then as the weather started to change I got my usual cough and bronchial trouble. In amongst all this I was supposed to get an essay finished for my MA. Whilst at home in bed I was able to pray and sort through priorities and have decided to put to one side my studies as I do not have time and when I sat and did my essay all I thought about was all the other things in my churches I should/could be doing. Once I made the decision and wrote to the seminary I felt a lot better and now feel able to concentrate on the things, and people, which are important here. We also had an NGO meeting last month and I am no longer part of the board of directors, due to a change over, but I did almost find myself being elected vice president, but thankfully was able to decline for the same reasons already mentioned above. One positive thing is that I have started playing squash again with Margaret on Mondays which is a good break.

Well I hope this has filled you in with some of the news and brought you up to date. I continually thank God for his many blessings here and for you all who through your support and prayers, accompany me in the ministry here.

Prayer requests:

- For all the mums and children in Shalom
- For the Sunday services in Shalom and this Saturday's activities
- For land to build a centre for those with disabilities
- For Luisa and the therapists in their day to day work with the children
- For my health and the use of my time and resources
- For those in preparation for Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation
- For the churches and ministry during my absence July/Aug
- For the Bishop, especially his health, and the election of an Assistant Bishop
- That the Lima winter would not be too harsh

With much love and many blessings,

Pat



Reg. Charity: 221328 Allen Gardiner Cottage, Pembury Road, Tunbridge Wells Kent

TN2 3QU **Patricia Blanchard** Artesanos 150#151, Apartado Postal #116, Lima 33, Peru

email:- pblanchard@anglicanperu.org info. and more photos posted on: <http://>

www.patinperulatest.blogspot.com