



FRIENDS

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ST JAMES THE APOSTLE

November 2020



Fr. Cecilio Moraga with Youth Group and Pastoral Group Volunteers

A People of Hope

Dear Friends,

Fr. Cecilio Moraga, of the diocese of San Diego, CA, has been with the St. James Society for five years. He spent four years in Villa El Salvador, Lima, before opting to moving to the rural town of Tinta, in the Diocese of Sicuani, high in the Southern Peruvian Andes. Like all of our priests, Fr. Cecilio is doing whatever he can to help his parishioners during these distressing times resulting from Covid-19. He updates us from Tinta:

While COVID-19 affects the whole World, I am sharing with our Friends of the Missionary Society of Saint James the Apostle, how the Pandemic affects the lives of our parishioners in Tinta, Peru, high in the Southern Peruvian Andes.

Our community is a farming community. The Farmers or 'Campesinos' plant potatoes, rice, corn, wheat, barley, and vegetables. They basically plant for their family's consumption. When they

Diocesan priests serving the poorest of the poor in Latin America since 1958.

have a bountiful harvest, they trade their produce with beef, pork, chicken and other household items. They can send their children to the public schools and some have access to the Internet and cellular phones. They spend a lot of time and energy in preparing for our town 'Fiesta', a three-day celebration in honor of Saint Bartholomew, during the last week of August. There are numerous groups of dancers and musicians, wanting to entertain local and foreign visitors with their rhythmic movements and colorful costumes. It is an accepted practice that 'Cerveza' (Beer) is generously shared, together with the Peruvian Specialty, 'Cuy al Horno' (Roasted Guinea Pig). In general, the celebration is festive and peaceful. Everybody is looking forward to being part of the Fiesta, either as



Fr. Alain Rado delivering food baskets in Tinta, Peru

entertainers or spectators. And then the COVID-19 Pandemic came.

Due to the Lockdown, celebrating the Fiesta became the least of the parishioners' priority. That is understandable. They have to survive. Some farmers had to consume or sell their harvest and even the seed for next year's planting season. There was no work. There was little food and almost no money. Even worse, they had to resort to taking out loans with high interest whenever a family member got sick or died. School children who do not have access to the Internet simply dropped out of School. Our parish Church closed, in line with government protocol, so the parishioners have little or nothing of social interaction. It is the *Worst of Times*.

Peruvians are generally ashamed or afraid to ask for help. They would rather find work or sell something than beg. But this time is different. The children and elderly are the most vulnerable. They get sick. They go hungry. While some receive assistance, the majority do not receive anything from the National or Local Government. It is indeed the *Worst of Times*. But Peruvians are a people of Hope. They suffer but they do not give up. They strongly believe in God and they can rely on people of goodwill. As a St. James Priest here in Tinta, Peru, I relayed our peoples' situation to our Director, Fr. David Costello. I informed him of our people's condition and asked if we could somehow help, most especially with Food Assistance. I received a very encouraging response that the Missionary Society of Saint James the Apostle will send the much-needed help. I shared the good news with Fr. Alain Rado with whom I work in the parish, which covers several villages and towns in this corner of Peru. Fr. Alain called a meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Youth Group to identify the people who are most in need, regardless of race and religion. When the much needed funds arrived from Boston, the members of the Pastoral Council helped in purchasing the most needed food items like Rice,



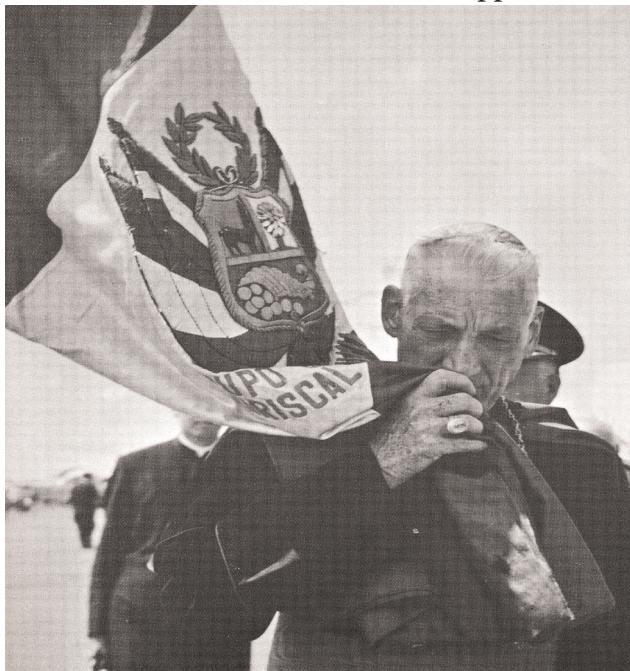
Sugar, Salt, Flour, Cooking Oil, Beans, Detergents, Toiletries, Paper Goods, etc. The Youth Group, numbering around a dozen, spent one whole Saturday in packing and bagging the food items for distribution. For four days, the Pastoral Council and the Youth Group travelled by truck and on foot and personally delivered the "Canastas de Viveres" (Food Baskets) to the neediest in their homes. Two hundred families were helped by this endeavor. A number of recipients were in tears when they received the 'Canastas'. Many Catholic families also asked the question, "When will we be able to celebrate Masses once again?" In the midst of their physical need, there is the more important, the spiritual. It is the *Best of Times*. The Pastoral Council, the Youth Group, Fr. Alain and I were conscious that Food Baskets would help only a fraction of our population. This is the reason why we planned for a Second Phase of Food Basket Assistance. The Second Distribution is planned for October. The Pastoral Council once again identified and made it a priority to reach out to those individuals and families who have not received Food Assistance in July: The Elderly, the Widows and the Orphans. We are very grateful to God and to all of you, our friends and benefactors, for praying for and supporting us financially here in Tinta, Peru. We know that the Lord will repay each of you for your generosity. If you ever have the opportunity to visit the Southern Peruvian Andes please know you will be welcome to visit us here in Tinta, Peru and see for yourselves that in the *Worst of Times*, our people discovered with God's help, that it is also the *Best of Times*. Thanks be to God and thanks to each one of you, our dear Friends.

Sincere thanks to Fr. Cecilio and his team of volunteers in Tinta, and to all of you, our benefactors and friends, for making it possible for us to continue to reach out in a very tangible way to those most in need during these very challenging times.

***Remembering our founder, Richard Cardinal Cushing, on the 50th Anniversary of his death.
November 2nd, All Souls Day.***

Richard Cushing was born on August 24, 1895 and ordained a priest on May 26, 1921, by Cardinal William Henry O'Connell at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross. Barely a year after ordination, Father Cushing approached the Cardinal with a request to become a missionary. O'Connell's reply was to name him assistant director of the archdiocesan office of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. He served in that position from 1922 to 1929 when he was appointed the director, a position he retained even after his nomination as

auxiliary bishop. Cushing served as Archbishop of Boston from 1944 to 1970 and was elevated a Cardinal in 1958. He died on November 2, 1970. Commenting on the Vatican II document, Decree on the Nature of the Missionary Activity of the Church, Cardinal Cushing stated, "For years, many of us thought of mission work in a narrow sense; the presence of the Christians giving their example of justice and charity, the Christian life, in the midst of pagan groups and thus converting them. As a matter of fact, the concept of missionary activity has been given a renewed dimension. The missionary activity of the Church is not only the bringing of Christ to people who do not know Him. But is also the strengthening of the Christian community where it is not fully developed, and the rebuilding of the Christian community where it has fallen into a state of disarray."



Kissing the Peruvian Flag - Richard Cardinal Cushing, Papal Delegate to Eucharistic Congress, Peru, 1960.



Those among us, who walked with Cardinal Cushing, heard his impassioned homilies and read his writings possess powerful memories of charity. Many remember him as a maverick among his brother bishops; others recall him as a down-to-earth visionary who was courageous and simple. But unanimously he is remembered as unconditionally generous, a prayerful bishop who took Gospel risks rooted in complete trust of the Holy Spirit to guide and provide. Those who loved him were moved to action by his faith. On this 50th anniversary of his death, let us be challenged by Cardinal Cushing's request to seek contentment as an ordinary priest, religious or lay missionary within the Universal Church, the living Mystical Body of Christ on earth.

(Source: Bill Milhomme)

With Every Good Wish in Christ,

Rev. David Costello
Director



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