

Dear Family and Friends,

We left Chicago on Jan. 9. Our flight was good with no delays. We arrived in Chulucanas on Jan. 10 at night. It is nice to be back. We were able to rent the same house so it was like coming home. We have been spoiled since we have had water anywhere from 6 AM to 4 PM to 6 PM. Pure luxury!

The weather has been OK. There has been very little rain but today we had a downpour. When we left the desert was green but when we got here this time, it is all brown dirt. The nights and mornings have been pleasant. It gets up to anywhere between 90 and 112 so far. We are not really into summer yet.

The day after we arrived, we met with the Monsenor and the pastor of the cathedral parish to discuss our work this year. So we are teaching a Bible study on Revelations, meeting with the couples group from last year, meeting with a Youth Group talking about forming relationships, teaching English classes and having private appointments.

Our Fridays are for private appointments and we were busy all day today. They have so many problems and need a listening ear. Next Friday is already booked solid so guess we won't have any free Fridays this year.

We met the shoeshine boy we lent money to last year. He has paid almost all of the money back. Because he was so responsible, we just lent him money to register for High School next year. He is 13 yrs. old, streetwise, very intelligent, great personality and supports himself with his work. He pays for his own food and expenses. His father is an alcoholic.

The place we love to spend our spare time is the town plaza. It's a very busy place...lots of activity, especially on the week ends. The sad part of it is watching the small children shining shoes and selling candies, cigarettes, etc... A 5 year old boy was trying to shine Ed's shoes one night around 9:30 PM. He kept falling asleep while trying to shine the shoes. It took him about 25 minutes to finish. Within 5 minutes we saw him sound asleep on the terraza floor of the plaza. We hear that if he goes home without money, his father beats him. One night he stayed there all night because he was afraid to go home with nothing.

There was an election for mayor. The old guy lost so the town is extra dirty. It seems that the outgoing politicians spend all the money so the new one has nothing to start with. Therefore, the town is dirtier than ever with more garbage thrown everywhere. Asi es la vida!

We have 3 Augustinian volunteers here with us. They are great kids (23 to 28 yrs.) and it's a pleasure to have them here. They solve our computer woes along with their other duties. If you have any young adults who speak Spanish and want to do service, they have a great program. It is through Villanova University. They have international and domestic stations that they fill each year. Spanish is only necessary for Chulu.

Keep up the prayers for us. We're hoping good intentions and effort count for something during our time here. We make lots of contacts and pray for guidance! We try to plant the seeds of faith, hope and love. Will they take hold? As the people say here, "Only God knows".

Let us know what's going on in your part of the world. You are all in our prayers!

God bless,

Ed and Pat