

Dear Friends and Family,

Here we are in our last week in Chulu. It has gone so fast and we don't know how that happened, but it did. We are finishing our couples and Bible Tuesday, English on Wednesday, Private Appointments, etc...will be finished by Thursday.

Ed has to finish the roof over the Asilo stove on Thursday. Ed and a helper built a roof over their outside stove. They cook outside in the sun, rain, etc... with no protection. Ed bought guayaquil (bambo poles) and calaminas (corrugated tin) for the roof. He is almost finished except for securing the sheets a little better. It's hot enough in 140 without cooking in it...literally.

This is going to be the story of a Bishop who is Pastor to his people. Last weekend Ed and I went to La Laquiz with him. He got a call Saturday night that no one was in Salitral to celebrate Mass on Sunday. So, we left at 5:30 and on our way to La Laquiz (we were supposed to arrive at 9), we stopped at Salitral so he could celebrate Mass and raise the flag in the plaza. Of course, by now it's 9. So we continued on our bumpy ride on the gravel/dirt road for another 2 hours. Upon our arrival there (at 11), we got out of the car at the edge of town and walked into town. He had to greet everyone in the plaza before Mass. So by noon we were at Mass. People just wait patiently for him to arrive. Some had walked 2 hours or more to get there, so time is not that important to them.

After Mass, we had to go to a house to eat. This is where Ed and I get skiddish! We ate a plate of rice, chicken, a gravy made of mashed potatoes and beans and drank chicha morada (their drink made from purple corn). We hoped the water had been boiled for a long time because the kitchen was very dirty and smelled!! We left for home about 3 PM and had a four hour ride home. Of course, we had to stop in Salitral and have something to eat AGAIN. Whoopee

The rains have started. Someone must be praying! The good part is the rain, the bad part is us getting stuck in the middle of the river and the car dies. Oh well, when the water started coming in at the bottom of the doors, we knew we could be in trouble. I figured we would just walk across the river and let them figure out how to get the Toyota 4 wheel drive out after we reached the other side. Finally, the car started and we sputtered and jerked the rest of the way across the river. That was only one of the five sections of the river we had to cross. It is a curly river and there are no bridges. It won't be long and no one will be able to cross. Last year a carload of people tried to cross and the current turned the car over and 6 people died. We didn't want a repeat performance!

Bishop Dan traveled six hours over bumpy roads and through rivers to Huancabamba Saturday afternoon of this week. On Sunday he installed a new pastor and returned to Chulu...another 8 hours down the mountain. He got here in time to change his clothes and leave for Piura to take a 9 hour bus ride to Trujillo for the opening of the school year for one of the seminaries where he sends his men. He left at 11 Sunday night so he would be there in time for the ceremony on Monday. Most Bishops would take a plane or have a chauffeur drive them. But since he has limited resources, he takes the most economical route. No wonder he's so skinny! The travel is enough to shake everything out of you!

Neither of us have gotten sick. Glory hallelujah! It has made the time here so much easier this year. Must be the prayers!

Every Monday morning there are about 300 to 400 people waiting in front of the municipal building hoping to get work. They have a row of policemen in front of the door with billy clubs and guns protecting the building. The people are all looking for work and Monday is the day they give out about 20 jobs for the week. The people start pushing to get at the front of the line but it's mostly who you know!

We have been visited by a rash of men raising their children alone this last two weeks. One man came to ask us to help him find a job. He has five children, three still at home. His wife died of an asthma attack because they didn't have money to buy an inhaler. He is now raising a 13, 10 and 7 year old alone. He said he would do anything to support his family. We are working with the Bishop to try to find something. He can't go anywhere else because he says he can't abandon his children. He is so willing to work but there is so little work here!

Another man, Nestor, 65 -70, comes into town for Bible Study when he can. He has a chacra (farm) so he walks into town for Bible Study. He is buying a Bible a sol a week (33 cents). He sits with his Bible in his lap and listens. Ed thought he was having trouble finding the Bible passage so started to help him. Nestor said he can no longer read since he has cataracts and doesn't have money for surgery. He is buying the Bible so his children can read to him in the evenings.

One day he arrived 15 minutes before we ended class. He was all apologies but he got hung up working and couldn't get away any earlier. We felt so bad that he had walked all that distance and had missed most of class. God bless him! I am trying to get help for his cataract surgery. I think there is a possibility!

Another man, Justo, is raising a 6 year old boy alone. He comes to talk to us about what foods he needs to be healthy, how to discipline him, and how to be mother and father to him. He is very poor but works whenever he can find something. When he gets home, it's late. Then, he has to start a wood fire on the floor and cook dinner. He is so concerned about being a good father to Aaron. It's an inspiration to see his dedication to his son. In this macho society we thought it was rare, but we are running into more and more fathers who are single parents.

We could go on and on with stories but this is getting long. We are going to try to send some pictures but have to wait for the volunteers to return today from Morropon.

Take care. We will be home on Tuesday, March 27 and are looking forward to being back in the USA. It is always a good experience here, but there's no place like home!

Thanks for all of your prayers, newsy emails, and other support you have given us during our stay here!

See you soon.

God bless...

Ed and Pat