

**CHRISTIAN BROTHERS • LATIN AMERICAN REGION**


MARCH - APRIL • 2015 EDITION

# LATAM



**IMMERSION  
GROUPS**



A vibrant autumn scene featuring a large tree with brilliant red foliage in the foreground. A wooden bench sits on a green lawn in front of it. In the background, more trees with green and yellow leaves are visible under a clear blue sky. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

*You can't start the  
next chapter of your  
life if you keep  
re-reading the last  
one.*



# CONTENTS

MARCH - APRIL 2015

**04** | **The Children  
of Villa Maria**  
Kevin Bernard

**08** | **Brother  
Edmund  
Community**  
Richard Glatz

**10** | **Cochabamba  
Community**  
Jorge Tavera

**12** | **Immersion  
groups in  
Hendricken  
House**  
Paul Keohane

**14** | **Two weeks  
with my new  
family**  
José Santamarina

**16** | **Holy Week**  
Guillermo Bullrich

**16** | **ERNSA**  
Social Justice &  
Advocacy Desk  
fieldworker visits  
South America

**17** | **50 years as a  
Brother**  
John Sullivan



*Br. Michael  
O'Donnell with  
students of Fe  
y Alegria,  
pin pong  
sessions.*

# The Children of Villa Maria

35 children, 11 students from Mundo Mejor and a Christian Brother

by Kevin Bernard

**A**mong the people of Chimbote the “Mundo Mejor” (a better world) school has the reputation of having the highest educational standards, the best discipline and the highest percentage of students who go on to university studies. All this is true, but for the students of fourth and fifth year of Mundo Mejor High School there is an additional aspect to their education – something they have to experience without fail, a year of Christian Service.

Only a few students were honest enough to admit that at the beginning, they were not looking forward to spending two hours

each week after school in an activity not of their choosing. Nevertheless, after having started their Christian Service the great majority of them look forward to fully participating in these activities.

There are three reasons for this: *relationships, relationships and relationships*. Because of the involvement required by their activities the students form relationships with children who lack many things in their lives. Yes, the majority of them are quite poor, but the most striking aspect is the eagerness of the children to spend time with a young man or woman of 16 years of age who is for the children









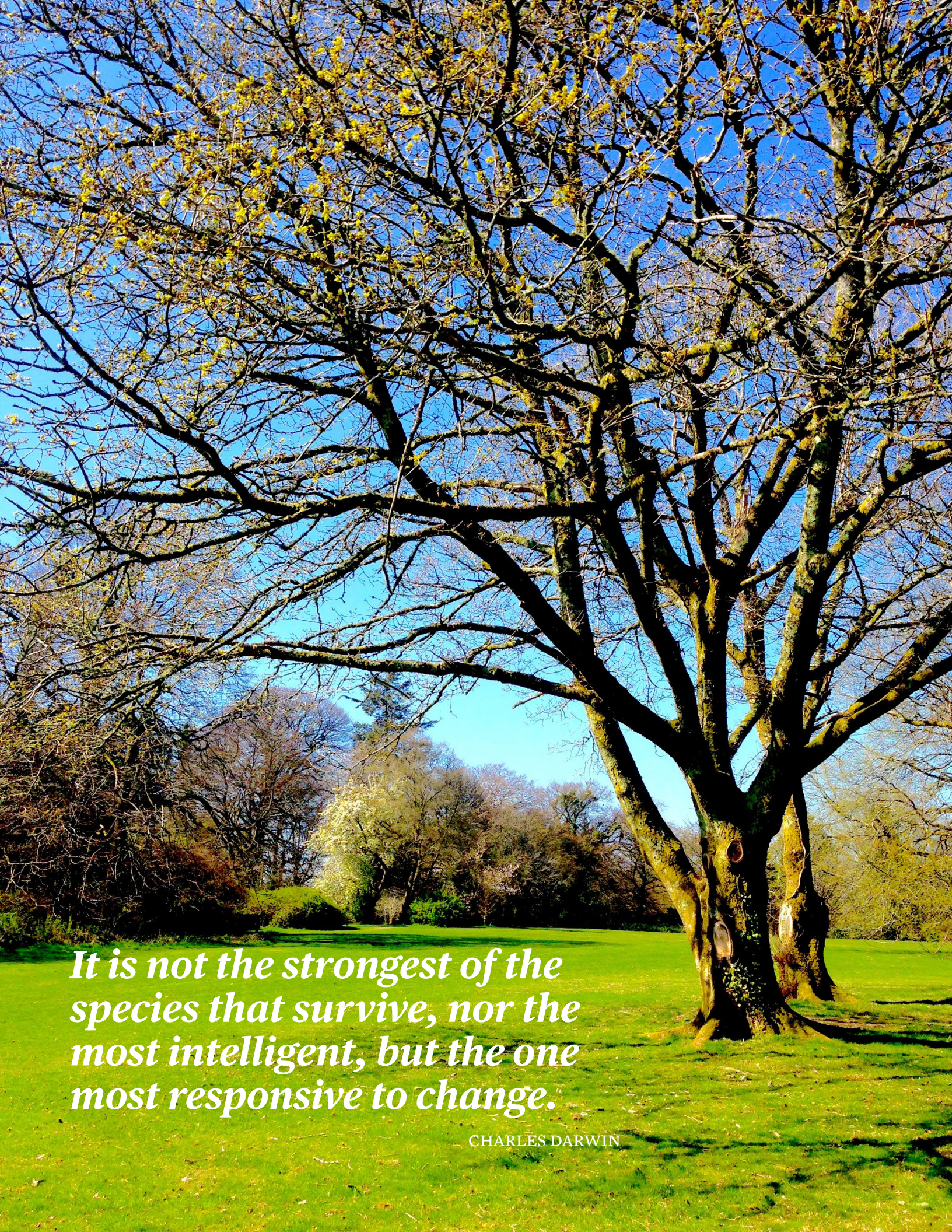
a model, an example of what is possible, a hero or heroine of life. The attached pictures indicate this.

We focus here on one of the six places where the “Mundo Mejor” students have their Christian Service experience: Villa María (Township of Mary). Villa María is a district between Chimbote City and New Chimbote in a factory area, with swamps and heavy traffic passing through the major road, the Panamerican Highway. There is no park, no trees and nothing of beauty. The local parish has a small library with a good sized study area whose roof is made of a local type of bamboo with poles, plastic and dried mud



giving cool and mostly water-proof covering. Thirty to thirty-five students from the area, and eleven students and one Brother from Mundo Mejor arrive at the library three afternoons a week. The goodness and beauty become evident by the presence of the children and their tutors who work together for their mutual benefit. One group – the children – improve their learning experience and the other group – the high school students from Mundo Mejor – grow in their experience of solidarity, of helping others, of being like Edmund Rice, willingly giving of themselves to others.





*It is not the strongest of the  
species that survive, nor the  
most intelligent, but the one  
most responsive to change.*

CHARLES DARWIN





## Canto Grande Community

Activities in the community of Canto Grande and Fe y Alegría School

**RICHARD GLATZ**

**PHOTO:**  
Brothers  
Stephen  
Casey and  
Richard  
Glatz.

**W**e wish to send you our most joyful greetings at this time as we celebrate Easter and the resurrection of Jesus.

We are already in the middle of the first marking period here in the “Fe y Alegría” school; seven weeks have already passed. A few days ago

our Principal, Mrs. Gaby Bravo and José Santacruz, who is in charge of the pastoral program, traveled to Montevideo, Uruguay, to attend the first meeting of the principles of the four schools for which the Congregation of Christian Brothers is responsible in Latin America. One reason the meeting was held in Montevideo was that the school there, Stella Maris, was celebra-



ting its 60th anniversary; we send them our congratulations and best wishes.

We have a young man, Anibal Torres Yahuarcani, as a residential candidate for membership in the Congregation, and he has successfully fit into our community. He attends classes in the inter-community formation program during the week and on Saturdays he goes to a language school to learn English. Michael O'Donnell continues providing ping pong to the students in both sessions of the school and he opens the library when the librarian is no longer there.

The marching band now has a new director, Bro. John Sullivan who continues in the great tradition of Bro. Rafael Inga. Xavier also is in charge of the tutoring program for the primary school and works with a group of seniors studying English in the High School. Our local leader, Bro. Alberto Llanos, teaches six classes of English, is in charge of the lunch program for those who need a good mid-day meal, and he teaches the residential candidate, Anibal, about the Religious Life.

Bro. Williams Cunyas assumed the post of vice-principal in charge of student life and discipline; he teaches eight hours of religious education in the High school and also works in the local parish as a teacher of Christian Life and is in charge of the choir.

Bro. Richard Glatz, in his role as Administrative Assistant, fills a plethora of jobs: he is the contact person with the Parent's Guild, supervisor of the maintenance staff, chief of maintenance, supervisor of construction projects, keeps track of parents who do not fulfill their responsibilities in taking turns in helping in the school, he's the athletic director, etc. His most recent project was to prepare and

present the policies for safety and fair treatment and child protection in the school.

The only thing lacking in having the long-desired school kitchen up and running are the final touches to the recent construction. Thanks to the help from the Diocese of Cork, Ireland, a school in Australia, Lima Cement Inc., and the parents of the students, soon the cooks will be able to prepare the hot meal for students in need in a full new kitchen rather than have to prepare it in several houses and bring it to the school each day. The other interesting project this year is that

students in first and second year of primary school are using tablets, yes simple but functioning tablets, to reinforce what they learn in math and reading comprehension classes. This was made possible by a donation from the Peruvian University of Technology and Engineering.

The Brothers, community continues taking steps to implement the Congregational Proposal, "Our Way into the Future", preparing an annual plan, monthly retreats and an Assertive Communication Workshop, among other community activities.



**PHOTO:** *Br. Richard Glatz with the maestro of construction of the kitchen.*





**PHOTO:**  
Activities  
at Brother  
Manolo  
Centre.

## Cochabamba Community

Activities in the community of Cochabamba and Brother Manolo Centre, a project run by brothers and volunteers

**JORGE TAVERA**

**G**reetings from Cochabamba the city of eternal springtime! The rains seem to have passed and we bask for long hours under sun soaked skies.

Dermot returned from vacation in March so now the community is complete. The community was delighted to host the immersion group from Iona College, New York. We were very animated by the manner in which they joined in community activities and the enthusiasm in which they participated in ministry at the Centro Hermano Manolo and at a home for

adolescents under the care of the sisters of Divino Salvador. We were privileged and honored by the visit of Brothers Julian McDonald and Richard Walsh of the CLT. Their presence did much to encourage both staff and children of the CeHM. Presently, Emily Masters a staff-member at the Social Justice and Advocacy Desk of the Edmund Rice Network in Capetown, South Africa is working with us.

Responsibility in home and neighbourhood was the theme of the first workshop for parents. Further meetings ensued and they served to strengthen the bond between parents, children



and educational staff of the CeHM. Volunteers and staff also recommitted themselves to the welfare of the children. The protection of children under our care was the subject of a day's seminar.

Martin Berndorfer, external supervisor to CeHM and president of the Yanapanakuna network of ministries to children, facilitated a workshop for the staff. We focused on our individual roles as part of our commitment to team ministry. RUN- Religious in the United Nations organized a workshop on how Codigo 2026 affects adolescent and child workers in Bolivia.

Nancy Tames, a member of the international office for the defense of children was the principal speaker. It was an opportunity for us to



refresh and reinterpret our understanding of the law in relation to work, education and children. *Leadership, Care of the Planet* and a celebration of El Dia del Niño were other themes to which time was devoted. 'El Grupo Focal' is an initiative geared to the participation of over 15s in order to help them focus on a career choice. This group meets fortnightly.

Conscious of the need for collaborative ministry in response to the call of Nairobi Eduardo

and Dermot are actively involved in discussions and meetings relative to the celebration of the Year of consecrated Life. The papal visit to Bolivia will take place between JULY 8TH-10th. The cities of La Paz and Santa Cruz will be the venues for his encounters with the people. We joyfully wait in anticipation.







## Experiences from the hill

Immersion groups in Hendricken House live unique experiences being part of the daily life of those made poor.

**PAUL KEOHANE**

**PHOTO:**  
*Prefab house  
constructed  
by  
immersion  
group.*

**M**arch and April were two months with plenty of activity in our community. In the last few days of February we had a meeting of the RAL leadership team in our house. Stephen and Pablo went on retreat to the retreat house of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.

Diego made two visits to Arequipa to continue his educational apostolate of preparing Science textbooks and organizing in service courses for

teachers. Four members of the CLT came to do a three days immersion experience with Stephen and Pablo. They have written their reflections in their newsletter. The CLT met for five days reflections with the RAL team in our community.

Three immersion groups came. They came from Iona Prep, New Rochelle, O'Dea High School, Seattle and Catholic Memorial, Boston. The three groups had very positive immersion experiences. The group from Iona Prep hadn't much luck on their trip to Cusco. They lost a



day and a half of their trip due to flight cancellations. The pupils from O'Dea were with us during Holy Week and we accompanied them to the passion processions in the centre of Lima. The group from Boston had very good luck with their visit to Cusco as their flight left 15 minutes early and they had a very enjoyable time. Group 23 from Cardinal Newman College arrived and the pupils are settling into the rhythm of the immersion.

Each group on the immersion experience constructed prefab houses high up on the hills and they had to climb many steps with the timber panels. The temperature has come down to about 25°C and the sun is not as strong as it has been during the summer months. We will share some reflections from the immer-

sion participants:

**WHAT IMAGE MADE AN IMPACT ON YOU?**

*The smiles of all the people with whom we worked.*

*The hard work the people do to survive and put food on the table.*

*The joy of Sra. Candelaria when we finished the construction of her house.*

*What surprised me most was the hope and love of the people on the hill.*

*The kindness and welcome of the people on the hill.*

*The poverty of the people surprised me, but they are rich in hope and happiness.*

*The people on the hill are not depressed by their poverty and that inspired me to take things in my own life calmly.*

**WHAT DID YOU LEARN?**

*I learnt that I need to change, complain less, have more compassion for others and be kind to those I don't know too well.*

*I learnt that I'm too preoccupied with material things.*

*What dream do I take with me?*

*I want to continue helping others.*

*I have a dream to come back here and help to make life better for people.*

*My dream is to be a better person and to be more attentive to the needs of others when I go home.*

*My future must include serving those in need.*

*We'll be back in contact with more news in two months.*







## Two weeks with my new family

Ten students from Cardenal Newman School spent two weeks in an exchange experience with families from New Jersey

JOSÉ SANTAMARINA

**T**hey first felt it on their shoulders and then they looked upwards to see what seemed to be a sheet of white spots floating in the air, like a parachute coming toward the earth but not exposed to gravity, as if it would never touch the ground.

the last. The Newman students were fascinated as if experiencing a party prepared just for them, while the Bergen boys and their parents felt distressed with one of the longest winter in years. “It never snows in March” they kept saying, while the side walk little by little turned white as the snow kept

The Newman students got into the cars with their suitcases along with their Bergen companions, ready to be part of a new family for two weeks. It was Sunday and the weather forecast predicted another cold day, however they could count on a 24 hours of rest before going to classes on Monday.

**THEY GAVE A PRESENTATION OF HOW THE EDMUND RICE EDUCATION TRADITION IS LIVED OUT IN NEWMAN**

For the visitors this was the first

snow fall of the season, although for those of Bergen Catholic it was

falling over the roof of the yellow school bus.

During their stay the Argentine students participated in classes and other activities of the school. They were together with their American coun-



terparts in Physics, Literature and gym classes, practicing their English and also in Spanish classes. For the Day of International Culture the ten Newman students were on stage before the Bergen students, their parents and teachers, giving a presentation about Argentine culture and customs, as well as a description of how the Edmund Rice education tradition is lived out in Newman, much like that of Bergen Catholic.

Using their scarfs and woolen hats to protect them from the cold, they had the opportunity to spend a day in New York City. The multitude of skyscrapers brought to mind the movies of King Kong and Superman. They visited Rockefeller Center, St Patrick's Cathedral, and the 9-11 Memorial where they felt much moved by the tragic events of the Twin Towers.

They had opportunities to visit other tourist sites, but much more

important for them was the stay with their adopted parents and brothers imbibing the American culture and connecting with its costumes.

The "Boswel Family" organized a wonderful meal for all the participating families and school representatives in which they enjoyed a large variety of tasteful foods, which pleasantly surprised Blas Achaval who was much impressed by this manifestation of hospitality offered to the entire group.

This experience will be repeated later this year, first in Buenos Aires and then in New Jersey, accompanied by a variety of climatic conditions (snow, winds, sun, etc.) that the weather will determine, all of which will not in the least affect the heart-felt expressions of good will of the immersion experience, in which the two groups will fuse their respective Edmundian cultures for 15 days.

## The Holy Week activities

Peter's anxious eyes, John's hands receiving bread from Jesus, the suspicious look on Judas' face, all these which we have seen in a painting of the Last Supper, once more reveal to us the great and eternal mystery of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

This was the image on a mural hung on a school wall to celebrate Holy Week in the Newman thus setting the stage for the events of this liturgical season.

To recall the important moments of Holy Week, a ceremony was held in which were seated at a table two students of Sixth Year, two teachers, two members of the Pastoral Commission and two mothers: representing the school community, who in a prayerful manner, reflected on the Stations of the Cross.

This activity, programmed for Wednesday of Holy Week, was held on the sports' field. Fortunately the day brought nice weather so that the students were able to sit on the grass.

For each Station, the members seated at the table, one at a time, shared his/her impressions of the meaning of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. Afterwards all returned to their respective homes and parishes to celebrate the transformative and life-renovating mysteries of the Pascal season.





# RETREAT

GUILLERMO BULLRICH

**W**hen I arrived to the retreat my worries vanished. The retreat center reminded me of last year's retreat with the same class companions. I was a bit nostalgic but also happy and tranquil. For me this retreat came at just the right moment, it helped me to come nearer to Jesus, to my friends and also to my inner self, a time to stop and reflect on issues that are really important in life, opening my heart to those with whom I come in contact every day and whom I often do not appreciate. I am grateful to the school for making possible this retreat that helps me to have better relations with those of my class.

This was how Lucas Marguery, a Sixth-year Secondary student described his experience. From Thursday, April 9 to Saturday, April 11, the first of three retreats were held in La Casa de Maria, a retreat house some 70 kilometers from the Capital Federal, a lovely setting surrounded by lush vegetation, fresh air and friendly people.

Another retreat was coordinated by Sebastián Micheloud and Guillermo Bullrich for a group of past students and had for its theme: Friendship, Freedom, and a more human and intimate vision of Jesus. The main dynamic used was sharing in small groups highlighting how the virtues of each member enables him to live his life in freedom according to the values promoted by Jesus.



## ERNSA in the Region

**Social Justice & Advocacy Desk fieldworker Emily Masters visits CBC Schools, ERN Projects, Programs in South America.**

**E**RNSA is the Edmund Rice Network of South Africa and one of its members, Emily Masters, is presently visiting schools and communities of the Brothers in Latin America. Emily is 25 years old, surfs as a hobby and works as a social assistant in the Edmund Rice Network in Cape Town. She visited our school during the end of February and the beginnings of March.

Her visit was very productive, for she shared with us the experiences of her work in South Africa and we were able to explain to her our education experiences in the School.

Emily spent two weeks in Buenos Aires, most of the time living with two different families of the Newman community. During her stay she was taken on visits to the most iconic and interesting tourist sites of the Capital.

We leave with you a short testimony that she left in her personal blog:

*"My visit in Buenos Aires during these last days inspired me to use a new word from the dictionary: MUNIFICENT, which means extraordinarily generous. This word describes the hospitality which I received from the Pastoral Team, teachers and students of the school, the family Lanfranco and the El Arca community. I felt very welcomed as if I were in my own home."*

<http://www.ernsa.org/#!emilys-pilgrimage/ch4>





## Fifty years as a Brother

John Sullivan tells the joy of being a Brother for the poor in South America during several years of service.

**JHON SULLIVAN**

**W**hen I think back about my life as a Christian Brother, two words come to mind – happiness and warm reception. In all communities in which I have lived, the brothers in those communities have always welcomed me and, in a short time, I enjoyed their company.

At the present moment, we are six brothers in our house in Canto Grande, Lima. Our brothers are from 33 years of age to 76 years. We are from

Peru and from the United States. Each day, we live our two cultures.

I have had the good fortune of working in formal education as well as in informal education. In Monsefú, we brothers teamed up with lay youth leaders and have given teen retreats in two departments of Peru. In Canto Grande, I had the good fortune of teaching adults on Saturdays. For four years in Cochabamba, I helped child workers with their homework every day at the Brother Manolo Center.

Here, at my school, Fe y Alegría, I tutor primary school children from second grade to sixth grade. We work on reading comprehension and mathematics skills. If there is some time left at the end of the class, we play card games for a bit of fun.

I have been lucky to have lived in three very different cultures – North American, Peruvian and Bolivian. I feel that all three have touched me in a special way, and I have learned so much from each of them.

During the fifty years that I have been a Brother, I feel that our biggest achievement on a congregational level has been the deep appreciation we feel towards Edmund Rice's Charism, his spirituality and how he lived his life during a very unjust period of Irish History. How he offered up his life to the poor, and his dedication in establishing a very successful system of popular religious education has been my inspiration to keep working in my neighborhood here in Lima. Edmund Rice's spirituality has been a magnet for attracting so many colleagues y associates for the Edmund Rice Network.

I feel that Edmund has much to teach us as we go on the "Our Way into the Future".



# LATAM

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## NEWSLETTER

**Latin American Region**

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