

# Marcés Mailing

## September 2020



Out of Lima for a few days – a real treat!

He who is in you  
is greater  
than he who is  
in the world.  
(1 John 4:4)

*The Diocese is  
holding studies;  
one series was  
John's epistles)*

### **Please pray for:**

**Juan Carlos:** Responsibilities in J el Nazareno, the Cathedral and the Diocese

**Penny:** Responsibilities in J el N and Children's Ministry

**Juan Carlos + Penny:** working out priorities and use of time

**Bishop Jorge Luis:** wisdom in leading the Diocese

**Jesús El Nazareno:** ability to keep in touch with the Lord and with each other

**El Nazareno area:** families grieving deaths of members; civic responsibility; economy; schooling

**Cathedral:** New Spanish speaking congregation, situations which need resolving

**Country of Peru:** Politics – tensions between Cabinet and Congress; wisdom in facing health, economic and educational situations, and in opening up areas of life (inc. Church!)

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Dear friends

Out of Lima for 3 days, viewing mountains and river, helped us appreciate God's greatness and helped put things back into perspective, six months after the tsunami of covid hit.

**Power of covid:** We live in the capital of the country which now "enjoys" no. 1 position on the "deaths per million" table, even considering only official covid deaths, (which account for less than half excess deaths here since April). Why, given that strict lockdown measures began before anyone had even died here, has Peru been so badly affected? Contributory factors include: lack of investment in health services despite the increasing prosperity of Peru over recent years (thus the lack of ICU beds, oxygen and medicines); the fragmentation of health services into different autonomous bodies; and the inability of many to follow the guidelines, partly due to disobedience and partly due to necessity (you HAVE to work to buy food).

The following snapshots illustrate this, bearing in mind that Jesús el Nazareno is in an area where many households have multiple families:

*(Background: J is a neighbour, on the fringe of Church who had covid near the beginning)*

Penny: "it's good that no one in this street has died from the virus, when so many in the area HAVE died"

J: "Yes. Of course we all had it in the house, but we were asymptomatic"

P: *(openmouthed beneath her face covering as she uses this word, remembering a phone conversation with her when she was sick)* "I seem to remember you weren't at all well."

J: "True, sometimes I really had to struggle for breath. But I was asymptomatic." *(sudden realisation: "asymptomatic" = "not on oxygen")*

P: "I told you not to go out, and I sent the voucher for you to pick up food in M's name but then Karla told me you went too"

J: "Well he doesn't know what to buy, and what things cost, so I had to go too, to make sure he did it right." *(Doubtless true, but hardly what was SUPPOSED to happen. How many did she infect??)*

*(Background: Current rules: over 65s may only go out for emergency medical treatment; under-14s may go out, accompanied by an adult, for half an hour a day; everyone else – only go out when necessary.)*

The street is pretty full, a volley game in progress, half the participants without facemasks. A daily event...(2 days later the police tore down the net, pointing out that this is NOT PERMITTED. Mind you, we'd be going mad too if we were living in the cramped conditions many of them have.)



So, covid may appear to still have the upper hand, but God is greater. How can we see this?

**Power of the word of God:** We returned to Peru in Aug 2019 with the clear aim of reaching the wider community. We did not imagine that a pandemic would provide ample opportunity to share with so many God's love and presence with us in all situations! Not only have people seen His love in the midst of material needs, but we have built up some lovely relationships. What joy when a mother mentioned last week that she missed praying with Penny; her mobile was stolen (on her way home from the hospital where she had just been told her uncle had died from covid) and only recently has she got a new one. Building on these contacts, Bible month (Sept) has provided a wonderful opportunity to share spiritual food, in the form of prayer and leaflets, as people queue with their containers in the 2 soup kitchens that we have been supporting since they reopened in July.



**Flower power!** A totally unexpected way of showing that someone's value, when they live in a world which gives them little worth, occurred when the



non-RC Thanksgiving Celebration, celebrated every year on 29 July as part of Independence Celebrations, was "held" in the Good Shepherd Cathedral. It was "virtual", with President (and others!) watching on TV, but JC WAS there as logistics coordinator and thus had to provide flowers. Afterwards, roses not given to people present were taken to give to women in Jesús el Nazareno and the cooks in the soup kitchens – the

psychological effect of being given a rose which could well have been given to the President's wife (and which she SAW!), but which has been given to you instead, was far greater than we had imagined.

**Political power:** Covid is not, unfortunately, the only tsunami here right now. Ongoing tensions between Cabinet and Congress have led to a demand for impeachment of the President. Thus adding political instability to the list of woes, which already include the sad health and economic situations.

**Power in a Church?** Last but certainly not least, the Anglican church here also suffered a slight tsunami when the Dean of the Cathedral resigned unexpectedly at the beginning of August. For various reasons, Juan Carlos was thus installed as new Dean, behind closed doors, in addition to responsibilities in Jesús el Nazareno. Whilst it



is currently possible to go from a service in one to a service in the other in 5 minutes (on Zoom), it remains to be seen how things will be resolved when we can finally meet for services again.... The new congregation IS new – almost all the previous congregation were left very confused and have declined to attend.



- Julio P and Juana growing in the Lord
- relationships with many neighbours
- technology to continue communicating the Gospel
- ability to help with material needs
- children's materials, seen by children and parents; series on Peter and on "People in Genesis" have finished and we are now "Following in Paul's steps"

## Please pray.....



### Weekly activities

**Mon, Wed, Fri, Sun:** WhatsApp children's devotional – pray for inspiration

**Sun:** 9.00 am WhatsApp chat form of service sent (JEN)

10.00 am Zoom service (Jesús el Nazareno)

11.30am Zoom service (Cathedral)

6.00 pm WhatsApp group services (J. el Nazareno)

**Wed:** 8.00 pm Bible study /prayer meeting (Cathedral)

**Thurs:** 7.30pm Zoom prayer meeting (Jesús el Nazareno)

8.45pm WhatsApp group prayers (J. el Nazareno)

### General prayer requests

- Coronavirus situation: health, economy, civic responsibility; protection in visiting El Nazareno where there is still a high level of contagion
- Peru preparing for general elections next year, and bicentenary of independence
- Becky (Leeds), Lizi (Leeds), Jonny (Lima), Hilda (JC's mum – Lima; in her flat 3 weeks then a week with us each month)

Thank you for your fellowship with us; you too are part of what happens in the Anglican Church in Peru, and in Peru. Please keep in contact, by email or WhatsApp at +51-942612987

May we always know that our God is greater, and may He bless and protect you, now and always

*Juan Carlos & Penny*