

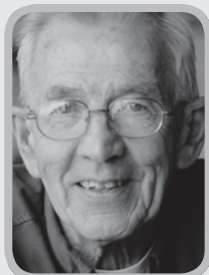
# THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS' CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • Winter 2012



## Christmas 2012 Issue

### Padre's Message



Dear folks,

The exchange of gifts, including the exciting sound of getting through the colorful paper wrappings, expresses what words can't: God's felt presence to show us again the happiness of sharing instead of defending

or, worse, grabbing. Shoeshine Special readers are all in on that sharing. You give us some of your money, your concern, your good reports about us and your affection. We give you back the gift of knowing that your help is revealing to the poor families of working kids that our Creator is with us in all that goes on. They can feel God's own give and take in the gratitude for the good meals, the medical and dental care, education for jobs

and in learning to make and keep a budget using the savings to build new decent houses with each other's help. We don't have to travel to Bethlehem to celebrate living with our savior on His birthday. We stay where we are and celebrate the infinite generosity of Jesus in small intimate groups with colorfully wrapped gifts on Christmas Day. This was the day the baby Jesus came as the gift to be in all of us who, no matter how bad we are, want to identify with Jesus working the miracle of caring about each other. Words can't express the happiness. But even the tiniest gift says it all.

In Christ,

*John J. Halligan, S.J.*

John J. Halligan, S.J.



## Remembering The Way Up

There's a United Nations sponsored program that restores ancient structures considered to be part of humanity's patrimony. The four-century-old La Compañía church is one of those special treasures. The committee in charge of restoring it and the Jesuit colonial buildings surrounding it invited us all to a special event. It was the installation of a memorial plaque at the ground floor entrance to the church's bell tower. That tower now has a new elevator in it as part of the restorations. But it used to house an old staircase that went up to the entrance to the original Working Boys' Center and, then, on up to the huge bells in the tower above. The plaque memorializes the foundation of our Center and our daily climb up to it during the first of our five decades. For generations to come, visitors will know this is where we started.

Our Center is two years away from celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in 2014. That gives us time to prepare a celebration proclaiming the Center as the

best thing that ever happened in the recorded history of Ecuador, of the Jesuits and of the attic. Meantime, the unveiling of the plaque at the foot of the tower stairs drew a group of the original shoeshine boy members who came to help us take the tiny veil off the plaque. The disorder of having everybody getting two fingers on the tiny veil was like old times. A few tears were shed because, as they'll all tell you, the Center really is the best thing that has happened in their lives.



*Many original WBC members gathered to celebrate, participate in the commemoration ceremony and assist in the unveiling of the plaque*

# Meanings Of Christmas

**R**ichard Leon is in the third grade and a smart Alec. At the meeting called to humbly request ideas for this report on “What’s Christmas to you?”, he fibbed so grandiosely about his family tradition of a huge Christmas tree, big crowd of guests to eat at his house and piles of gifts so high, he lost his breath describing them. That’s when I asked him how many floors were in his house and if the elevator went all the way up to the helipad on the roof to avoid walking the dirty streets to catch the bus.



*Richard carefully sets the infant Jesus in the manger.*

He actually tried a “Yes.” answer. But the other kids roared with laughter and banged their fists on his head. I said we should get serious about Jesus who came as a newborn baby in an animal stable in the little town of Bethlehem. Smart Alec said, “He came to the whole planet.” The smirk was for getting my goat with the new “planet” word in his vocabulary.



*Richard sat down with Padre to share his vision of Christmas from his dreams. He made us stop and think.*

Richard is not into doctrinal development about the baby Jesus as divine savior of the whole world. But, besides fooling around, Richard was thinking. He made me wonder if kids who are more recently out of eternity into this place have a wider view than we ancients have of the limitless love that has God with us even when we’re giving each other grief.

**N**ine and twelve year olds, Monica and Rosita Chamba, got the discussion back to where we could handle it with firm descriptions of Christmas being a time for family, friends, things to enjoy and, especially, things to eat. This all started with that one generous man in the town who, by the light of a lantern, gave Jesus a bed, blankets, a meal and space for the whole family. He shared everything he could with them. So it wasn’t all bad being born in that cold and dark stable. The person who owned it made them feel welcome and they could all stay together. Rosita and Monica had us all crazy in love with the innkeeper who gave the holy family that way to enjoy each other on the best night of their lives with nothing they really needed missing. It’s no wonder Jesus saved us.



*Rosita and Monica (front) are pictured along with their parents, Angel and Maria, and their brother, Diego.*

**T**he Trujillo brothers, Byron 13, Arturo 9 and silent Jordan 4, are from a numerous family with a reputation for being friendly with everybody. Byron and Arturo were adamant that Christmas is a big, ongoing dinner with relatives and neighbors visiting each other for weeks. This confused me because the Trujillo clan is very poor and far from being able to throw a big party. Their neighbors aren't any better off. The kids patiently explained that the party is a real and old tradition since the time when Christ came and that the food can be any kind - definitely nothing out of the ordinary or better than others might have. It just has to be enough; and everybody has to eat and be sure their company is wanted by everybody else. The Trujillo gang's understanding of Christmas celebration is that Jesus wants everybody to stop being on guard against each other and to share what people used to fight over. That's why everybody has to go visiting and eat and have enough. It's each year's miracle of caring about each other.



*Little brother Jordan is a big helper who can carry the tree stand all by himself.*



*Everyone wants to help! The big brothers take care of carrying the Christmas tree at the Center.*

# Put True Meaning In Your Christmas

As our young Center members so eloquently reflected on our inside spread, the meaning of Christmas is that of helping one another as Christ helped us. Our Family of Families has been incredibly blessed with your continued generosity and we humbly thank you for that. If you're looking for another way to enhance the meaning in your Christmas this year, consider these options:



## Commit to a planned gift

We would be honored to be included in your future financial plans. Check out the many alternatives for supporting our Family of Family's future with a planned gift at [www.workingboyscenter.org/giving](http://www.workingboyscenter.org/giving).

## Automate your contributions

Time passes quickly and life gets hectic so we'd like to help your stress level by automating your generous support for our WBC Family. Go to [www.workingboyscenter.org/giving](http://www.workingboyscenter.org/giving), fill out the online form and send us a Christmas gift every month!



## Enable email communication

Please help us save time and money by sharing your email address with us. We have officially switched over to paperless tax notifications and we need your email address added to our list. Send an email to [donorthanks@workingboyscenter.org](mailto:donorthanks@workingboyscenter.org) to let us know you would like to let your donation go entirely to those who need it most – the families of the WBC. Thank you for your support.

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