

My Road, No Unauthorized-Trespassing

Not everybody in the world knows where Guangopolo is or who's the pastor of the church there or who cares. But that oversight in the education of the world's populace will end with courses in kindergartens on how to use GPS. There's a new road there along an edge of the town. It has been named: Padre Juan Halligan Avenue. Over two hundred yards of it are already paved and the clearing of forestry and paving into the miles ahead are definitely in the planning stage. This long overdue public recognition of my whatever as pastor has been officially recorded and approved in City Hall. Unfortunately municipal regulations require that I die before street signs with my name can be put up. So I'm not aggressively begging funds to put up a toll booth until I can somehow arrange cash transfers into the next life. I'm working on that. As things are, I'm going to die without a single cent to take with me. Everybody on earth that I tell about my own street simply guffaws and goes on talking about something else. But I'm happy with the honor and fame because I suspect some real and good results with traffic along the future time line.

I'll have to die soon. Also soon enough there'll be an inevitable need to get that road cut through the trees, paved and into use all the way to wherever. That'll take a few years just like building the church did. The street signs saying "father so and so" will remind road builders and walkers and riders of some priest and the church in Guangopolo. They'll be reminded that their recent ancestors dwelt far apart from each other, on the defensive in mud huts strewn over the hills, living miserably poor and close to the dirt or mud when it rained. Using the street will keep folks mindful that their whole history of developing friendships and of working on projects and of confidently looking in on solitary sick or old persons all began with the influential five defenders of the faith who went together all over the hills bravely approaching every hut to draft help to build a new church. The town's salvation history had a rebirth with the folks' answer to a need for their work which only they and nobody else could do. We have good evidence that the folks in Guangopolo



Padre Juan cuts the ribbon on his new avenue.

will let things like a road with a pastor's name on it keep christian living in style.

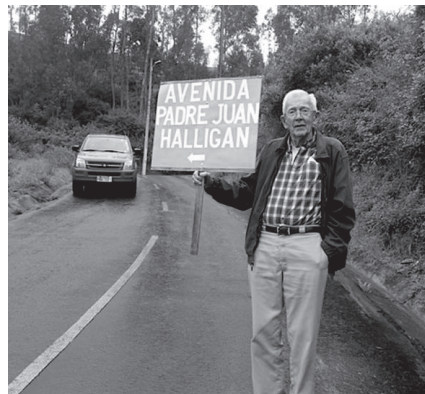
There are hardly any mud huts left standing even in the outskirts. Two story structures along very passable roads, pick up trucks



Celebrating our new road - paving not quite finished.

living. But it has not even slightly distracted them from the simple truth of how they were inspired and can inspire each other to work together on everything. Eloy Flores, Alberto Guamantica, Esteban Farinango and Jorge Espinoza ganged up on personal visits to get them all to come build a church. And they're still doing that.

Each generation has and will have different memories of changes to share with the kids. Hopefully the isolation without a place to celebrate mass will be long forgotten. Probably also forgotten will be some of the happy memories. Building the church made us hungry; so we scheduled breaks for ecstatic sumptuous snacks on bread and drinks. Our confidence and respect grew with banter about a know it all gringo priest out of cassock showing off he can work or about one of the natives showing his close mutual understanding with the donkeys he could lead up and down steps without blindfolding them. Such details will be forgotten. But there'll be a street that reminds us that our church inspires us all to help each other get where we're going.



Padre can't wait to die to be a celebrity.

Please mail contributions to

Center for Working Families.
12605 W. North Ave. #130
Brookfield, WI. 53005-4629

Caitlin's website: communityoutreach@c4wf.org

Pat Parks, Director Emeritus C4WF
262-797-8988 jparks@wi.rr.com

Jim Parks, Board President C4WF: boardpres@c4wf.org

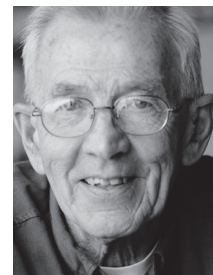


and cars, electricity, plumbing, pipes with drinking water, accessible good paying jobs locally or as far away as Quito and bus transportation in and out to education for jobs for the kids - all this has radically improved their comfort in

THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS' CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • SUMMER 2017

Padre's Message



DEAR FOLKS,

The Lord's peace be with you despite all the dazzling chaos

This edition of Shoeshine Special is dedicated to the Working Boys' Center's close and lifetime associate, the parish of Holy Trinity in Guangopolo, a town less than an hour outside of the capital city of Quito. Within the same twelve month period back in 1964 - 1965 both apostolates were assigned to the crew that still spends their lives in them fifty plus years later. On both sites we engage in what Christ taught His earliest friends. We spend each day warding off the aggressive darkness of Satan and struggling happily to stay in Christ's light. In other simple words, we have been involving you in saving all our souls by everybody giving to and getting from each other that show of love that seeks the other guy's best interest.

Five decades ago the overall view showed a rocky and dangerous road to and into Guangopolo. All mud huts and no retail stores, not even a big Coca Cola sign could be sighted. The folks were very simple and prudently suspicious of outsiders like the new gringo priest that Cardinal Muñoz was assigning to them. The faith planted by missionaries four centuries previously was there but asleep. Parish life and organization was going to be a slow starter. There was a falling down chapel never used. The people, humble and excluded folks were amazingly up to date with the world's new style of armed neutrality.

I'm guessing you'll enjoy this issue's memory lane stuff about five decades of sharing the special vigor of Christ's life in you with Christ's life in them out in Guangopolo.

In Christ.

John J. Halligan, S.J.
John Halligan, S.J.

Church Building Then Now and Always

Let's talk a bit about the building of the Guangopolo church. I don't mean about the steel rod reinforcing, sand, cement etc. I mean about creating the physical place where the parish love affair started, grew strong and thrives mightily today, because Jesus was in on it all. Who else could have put us in contact with Engineer Galo Pazmiño long dead now but hardly ever to be forgotten. Galo also directed the five year project of building the first Working Boys' Center. He bought into our crazy plan to build everything for us in stages of whatever amounts of materials and specialized professional work we could pay for with donations. We don't know the total cost of the church because we don't know how many tens of thousands of dimes he added to our collections. A talented artist in the village did a mural of the three persons of the Holy Trinity in the front wall behind a new altar down on the floor close to the congregation. It all took a couple of years and the constant activity got everybody interested. Even before it all finished, crowds from all the separate hills were coming to mass in the temporary tent the Ecuadorian Army lent us and we gave back in tatters.



1967 - Clearly, Guangopolo needs a church.

Some decades have passed and we have a packed church singing, clapping and saving souls every Sunday and feast day. But a group of holier than thou-s has commissioned a new and costly backdrop behind the altar with a set of statues, can you imagine, of the Holy Trinity, a two step up platform for a brand new altar above the congregation. I tell them I'm furious and want a ramp added up to say mass above them. But secretly I'm delighted because they run their own show including church, music, kindergarten, Sunday meals for the aged poor, sewing course for girls and mothers who need jobs, catechism program and, who knows?, maybe a ramp for the grouch. Church affairs are in the limelight.



God bless us with a church



1968 - Finally! We've started the building



Bless this road, O Lord.

Eloy Flores, Sacristan and Defender Of The Faith

It must have been a small hill that the original builders cut down and leveled to build their small chapel there. It has an everlasting stonework broad ten step stairway up to a solid foundation large enough for a church plus some activities. The old mud chapel's walls were saturated with rain water and waiting to fall on the first congregation to dare them. But the natives wouldn't allow any demolition until we had plans and some materials on hand to build a new church. Negotiations didn't involve any divide and conquer maneuvers through a power structure to make contact with the whole community. There were four guys (Turns out they were Guangopolo's defenders of its faith.) whose grandfathers had built that chapel, Eloy Flores who's still with us and Alberto Guamantica, Jorge Espinoza and Esteban Farinango now residing in Heaven. All I had to do was win them. But it wasn't easy to tear down a temple in the face of true believers. Maybe what convinced them I



Sing along with sister. Eloy, Alberto Guamantica and Hector Flores.

wasn't simply destroying their church was my participating in the actual work even scandalizing them with my cassock off. I won that one but have lost most of the rest; and, through it all, what lasts in memory is a huge treasure.

It was 1965. I was taking time out sitting on the stone stairway chatting with Eloy. Alongside were blindfolded donkeys burdened with piles of bricks or tubs of mortar being guided up the steps. I was learning Guangopolo building methods along with something much more important. Eloy wanted to talk with great sadness about John Glen's landing and walking around on the moon which to Eloy was a great big desecration. Everybody knows only God and the angels can live in those places in the sky. It was an opportunity to share with Eloy all I knew about the



Eloy Flores the faithful, wise sacristan, takes Jesus from the cross on Good Friday.

planets and the new space travel. I stopped only when I caught Eloy's gaze of deep sympathy for my missing his point not about playing around with our toys but about our indifference to where our Creator God's place is in our lives.

That was decades ago. Just last Sunday in the sacristy preparing for mass, Eloy and I were commenting on the deluges of rain making the roads dangerous and, even worse, ruining the crops. Eloy said, "Taita Dios (means: "Pappy God") is pouring down on us because He's mad as blazes at us for something." I babbled along about the Niño Current heating up the Pacific coast and the darkened clouds turning that drift into torrents and ... I stopped too late as I saw Eloy's head slowly shaking at my decades old obtuseness about God's place and contact not getting through.



Padre Juan and Eloy, faithful friends

Delfin (Means: "Dolphin" or "Elegant") or Just Plain: Segundo

From my very first days as pastor in Guangopolo my life was very much graced by the always happy presence of Segundo, a twelve year old when I first met him. His mother had named him "Dolphin" after the very elegant, extrovert and playful sea animal that's been known to save a lot of us from elements we can't handle. As a baby his mother and he on a trip into the big city to sell on the streets were caught in a traffic accident that killed his mother and left Delfin brain damaged and with the special vocation to be Guangopolo's spoiled child. All the villagers loved him very much and half the time called him "Segundo" or "little brother". His special needs during all his growth from boy to man helped allop Guangopolo become more of a family than a village. He's dead now. Died peacefully about ten years ago in his hut very suddenly from some innocent and unknown cause. But he continues as part of our lives. Constantly laughing with and at us.

His whole life was spent, the daytime hours roaming the Guangopolo streets, the darkest hours sleeping in his hut. We became fast friends from my very beginnings there because in that kind of village where nothing important was ever going on, any community activity was bound to be church-related. Segundo would sight my jeep coming over the hills and be waiting to get in on whatever. He was extremely rude and somewhat sinful. Often he would miss Sunday mass and blatantly laugh in my face when I told him God was not happy with his skipping mass. I thought he was laughing at me simply because he didn't understand. But he had a secret. I investigated and found out that some other sinners, whole families, were keeping their old custom from the time before they had their own priest and mass of big banqueting on Sunday mornings, the ideal time for throwing the house out the window on a break from living hungry and miserable all week long. Segundo wasn't about to miss out on any of those very special all morning long communal breakfasts. Years went by. The breakfast clubs disappeared with the city's provision of a



Segundo Delfin, Always With A Smile

good road for busses in and out to schools, good paying jobs and places to get to. So Segundo started coming to mass every single Sunday, late and right up to the altar to grab and greet with a loud laugh and salutation. His appearances became a rubric in our liturgy.

He couldn't cook even though his life depended on it. But Segundo was never in danger of going hungry. He made himself welcome to a meal just by showing up at any doorway and asking for one. He would



Fervent Segundo leads the congregation in prayer

be treated royally even by the poorest, eat well with great enjoyment and never say thanks before he hurried out. The folks all knew that he was in a rush to tell all the neighbors what rotten food he had been served. They all had hilarious fun sharing his awful descriptions of their charity. Segundo's vocation wasn't only this great capacity to accept the unrequited and genuine Christian love for him. He also guaranteed their love for each other with a unique talent we normally intelligent people could never exercise. It was his special brand of gossip.

Segundo could remember things he heard said and also communicate in a fashion quite accurately. He never hesitated to barge into any group indoors or outdoors of persons gathered together. He would make himself comfortable and even acceptable with his permanent grin and senseless commentary. It might take hours, days, weeks or even months for him to communicate whatever was said in any group to every other and even back to the same group. So there were no secrets in Guangopolo. If anybody had been criticized insulted, maligned or simply talked about in any group anyplace in town, there was an immediate confrontation and settling of accounts with the usual blow of all the dust and ashes. But Segundo's attitude and laughter were always connected to the accurate gossip, purifying any venom in the air around it. This made it all extremely humorous. So the air in Guangopolo stayed too clean with not enough elements of real dirt remaining for reasonable resentments and vengeance to cling to. It was impossible for hatreds to fester and get strong. If there were Segundos in all the neighborhoods of the world, we would never have thriving armaments, defense and false propaganda industries and all such progress. We'd be spending too much time sitting around chuckling at all the gossip reported by our Segundo.

I talk to Segundo frequently but especially when the evil threatens to overwhelm. Of course, he just laughs and goes all around up there telling everybody that I know and that knows me and laughing. He wins and has me laughing every time.