

Letter from Pat Blanchard



CHURCH
MISSION
SOCIETY

The call
in action

Dear Friends

I have this week sent an 'official' prayer letter to CMS for publishing so watch out for that soon, but in the mean time I want to fill you in with some actual news on our situation here in Peru.

Thanks for this opportunity to share with you all during these most difficult days. Peru was in a 15 day State of Emergency/ lockdown/ "Stay at Home" since Monday 16th March with an additional curfew measure between 8pm and 5am brought in a few days later, and as from yesterday this has been extended until Sunday 13th April in order to maintain our low numbers of those affected by the COVID-19. Not surprisingly there are more people detained from breaking the curfew and stay at home orders, than those affected. Today's figures: 26th March 2020 500+ infected and 9 deaths. Lima has the most cases due to the greater population. Our problem, as in many Latin American countries, is the poor health care system, Peru only has 300 respiratory machines! The government is trying to implement two new hospitals, one already built and which accepted its first patients yesterday and is designated exclusively for the COVID-19 patients and the Olympic village with its large 7 skyscrapers is apparently being turned into a 3000 bed hospital facility.

As Peru operates a large, informal employment regimen, many people live hand to mouth, especially in the shanty town areas where I am living. If people can't go to work - they don't have income. People don't have savings, they have relied on buying, selling, cooking, eating in the informal markets, street trading in most parts of Lima. The government has just started giving a donation to the poorest families according to the last census. I have heard that some local families have received the 380 soles (about £80) but other single mums with disabled children have not.

I am checking in on my church community by phone and we have now got into a good routine using the Whatsapp church group for services, bible study and prayer. I have popped out to visit a few people who have limited support, taking food, a smile and a prayer. Others have ventured to come to Shalom to receive help.

Pray for our President, Martin Vizcarra, and all world leaders, to make wise decisions regarding restrictions and policies to protect everyone from the expansion of this virus.

Pray that people everywhere would adhere to the restrictions in order to curb the infection rate.

Pray for all health workers as they tend the sick, and the police and army enforcing lockdown.

Pray for those who have no resources as they are unable to work, that they would receive the help they need to take care of their families at this time.

Pray for the disabled community that they would have access to medicines and the medical care they require.

Pray for the Shalom church, give thanks that many are participating in the technological activities. Pray for Amanda who is hospitalised with burns following an accident in her home a few weeks ago. She had skin grafts last week.

Pray for her recovery.

Obviously the Shalom Centre is closed so pray for all our children who are not receiving the therapy they need, pray also for the resources to continue paying staff and wisdom for future decisions in line with the government decrees.

Pray that I can continue to encourage people in their faith and help those in need as able.

Pray for my family in the UK, sisters, Christine and Vicki, brother in law Tony.

I had planned a UK trip for May /June and this is now probably cancelled but I will be in touch.

Also remaining in prayer for the UK and all places where there is on going spread of the virus.

Blessings and thanks

Pat