

# We Recently Had A Surprise Visit

We have always had the Christmas scene angels and each one's assigned guardian angel as our friends in high places. But all of a wonderful sudden, we have another powerful buddy right here on earth. This new friendship started because the Vice President of Ecuador relates well to working kids and has special interests in the country's level of production and its preparation of the labor force. He wanted to witness the Working Boys' Center's contributions in those areas. So he set a date to come and tour the whole of Center Number Two's family formation facilities and, while he was at it, he threw a big party for all of us and spent hours with our kids.

All working kids know how to speak their minds and one of ours told the vice president he would like to accompany him on his next airplane trip. The V.P. said he would take a whole group of the Center's boys and girls to the coast with his own family on his birthday which was coming soon. He made good on his offer. Not only did they fly in an airplane to spend his birthday on the beach with him and his family, but each kid had a navy man assigned as his

companion for the day. They each got new lifejackets for swimming in the ocean. They ate lobster for lunch. They helped finish off his birthday cake and then they all made a side trip to the port city of Guayaquil. They returned home late at night very tired and happy. One little girl was still wearing the life jacket the vice president had given to her personally. To see all the photos from the trip, go to: [www.c4wf.org/news/center-news/](http://www.c4wf.org/news/center-news/).



By the sea with Ecuador's Vice President and family

# Best Of All Is Who's In Charge



We know that God is in charge and we're grateful.

A friend said, "Wow! Fifty years! You don't celebrate that every day!" That started thoughts about one, fifty or a thousand vs. whatever and, of course, about a thousand years as one day to God who never takes his eyes off what's going on. On the other hand, we are perfectly capable of losing sight of exactly what and whom we are celebrating.

We're forever asking God to keep the Working Boys' Center going strong along with all of us who finance it, live it and survive with success because of it. Our routine these past fifty years has been a good time along with some to-be-expected social and political scares for our lives plus almost habitual economic doomsdays. But, most of all, we have been a

celebration in progress because we learned long ago how the providence of God works. Not that God ever showed up personally with a check in hand or a bag of money from the bank. God always used gifts from you and the other benefactors and we always tried to express our thanks hoping to Heaven that you somehow felt our deep gratitude in your own divinely inspired generosity. We know it's God's work and it's going on at your house as much as it's going on here.

Another experience over the fifty years has been our shortsightedness about the kids and families in our midst whom we couldn't convince to grab onto the help God sends. To save face we might say they were uncooperative. But we know very well that God's love and care for every single one is far beyond our little grasp. We don't have to waste the time saving face that we can use celebrating the glorious part God gives each and every one of us in this poor old world's salvation. We're allowed to help; but thank God we're not in charge.

# THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS' CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • CHRISTMAS 2014



## Padre's Message



DEAR FOLKS,

The Lord's peace is with us more joyfully as we lead up to and celebrate Christmas time. The peace of Christ is always felt as a power that is beyond and more important than our ordinary experience of problems and worries. It's a peace that has to do with the incarnation of God the Father's son who lets us be part of his living and loving and winning salvation in this wonderful but damaged world. He also lets each of us be a contact with Him for those around us.

It's almost normal that we forget the most important things and let minor things take all our attention and even upset us. We have to go shopping, get the dishes done, clean the place up, keep appointments, be on time, get the work done, pay debts and apologize for all we didn't get done. Any single day can get to be beyond hectic; and if we catch the evening news we can worry about the plots and promises of the crazies all over the place. At the

same time and in the same experiences, we know very well that Christ is steady on, in and with us. But we can't concentrate.

It's at Christmas time that we get the grace to use our heads and hearts more as we should. The kids help us too with their expectations of gifts to celebrate with. Our weak heads and hearts need the special decor of the tree dressed for a party, the miniature stable set up, lights, stars, tinsel and statues of shepherds and wise men at the scene and even costumes to act it all out. We stop everything else and get this all together for really living the Christmas season. Otherwise we're in danger of losing too soon each year this clear revelation of what life is all about. In the centerfold we show how we re-live Christmas at the Working Boys' Center.

We ask God's blessing on you.

*John J. Halligan, S.J.*

John J. Halligan, S.J.

## Look At Us Now

One of our events to celebrate the Working Boys' Center's fifty years of existence since way back on December 5th, 1964 was an invitation to a party on October 4th for all the former members and their spouses. Not all 65,000 ex-members came; but we



Original members thank Padre Juan for being a real "father" to them.

had a big crowd. Some of us hadn't seen each other since four or five decades ago when the earliest members were only six years and older. So we should have expected to see the vast amount of additional weight at the event. Good thing it was in the ground floor dining room at Center Number Two with no space under to collapse into. We were standing safe

and could be calm and take the time to recognize each other with that special affection God puts into persons who have learned how much they mean to each other.

The party was all that such affairs are supposed to be with music, speeches, giving plaques to each other, more music, eats, music, speeches and, after all the scheduled acts, some more impromptu speeches, more music. It was all very hard on the ears. The eyes had trouble staying dry when the very first shoeshine boy members of long ago took the stage together to pose for a picture of prosperity.

They have a message for us. - You think you have it hard? You don't know what hard is like we know what hard is. You probably didn't struggle and grapple with life like we did to stay in shape with a laugh a minute.

# Our Christmas Album

From spending time in the garden with Adam and Eve and seeing the Devil slithering around, God knew that His plan with limitless, no-matter-what love for the human family was too much for any of us to handle. The enemy was using all the tricks to make a dreary freedom from God and a stifling total involvement with our very own selves sound like exciting and irresistible experiences. So the longer range plan had to begin with that same love but deeper down below all dangerous babble. There's no nonsense down there, just faith and confidence as the only and supreme treasures to share. He would have Jesus come into our world as a baby in a place that would be fun together for all God's creatures like the tough shepherds, the old people, the kids, the animals and the angels, whoever and whatever. It would be a while before that plan of fun in the new age got started for all of us at the first Christmas; but once started it would never end. Obviously we're centuries into it by now and we have these pictures to show how we celebrate it in the Center.



*O Little Town of Bethlehem. . .*



*"What gift can I give Him? I'll give Him my heart."*

First of all we deck the place out with a whole view of Bethlehem's hills and trees and pastures and enough houses with stables to form a friendly village. Our folks in the Center created the giant sized angels not only to emphasize that the angels were very much present and excited over Christmas. The big angels also show not so subtly that God has some very powerful agents quietly watching over everything. They are the best and probably only friends our poor folks have in high places. Our big Christmas angels show that everybody was sure of their presence in Bethlehem and weren't too surprised when their singing voices started up all over the sky.

Every Christmas we ask the kindergarten and first grade boys and girls to make their hearts and ours out of red cardboard with drawings of love on them. That's almost as much work as Christmas shopping and the hearts make perfect gifts to the baby Jesus. But we don't just hand them to Jesus. We have a ceremony with a solemn procession and recitals and singing all eyes focused on the crib where Jesus is watching us. After that we explain to the kids that Jesus likes generosity and he has prepared gifts of his own that we give to them each with their names printed on the package in happy color. Of course this comes just before a break time so they can tear open the packages and get at the gifts.



*Thanks be to God, especially to Jesus.*



*We'll talk about this after lunch, Mary.*

The solemn high drama at our Christmas party features Mary breaking the news to Joseph that she is going to have a baby. It's a serious act which includes high tension, few words and very expressive body language as Joseph goes from haughtily saying: "You are talking complete nonsense!" to falling on his knees to adore Jesus in Mary. The rest of the Christmas play has a lot of laughs with the shepherds and the wise men dropping in, each with their versions of how they found out. This is where they all get their chance to tell how life will be so much happier for them knowing that we have Jesus saving us.

This calls for the start of a general big house party with everybody dancing and even the audience joining in the singing. After a few numbers we notice Jesus is contentedly yawning big time indicating he's relaxed and glad to be welcomed by everybody and he's tired and going to sleep.



*We bring you gold, frankincense and myrrh.*



*Jesus is tired and wants to rest.*



*Love like this makes the world go round.*

**PLEASE support our FAMILY OF FAMILIES this CHRISTMAS!**

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