



Heart's Home USA

A work of compassion and consolation

Newsletter
October 2006



Editorial : The warning of a Presence

by Gonzague Leroux

"NO", followed by a list of things one cannot do, is certainly the word one sees most while walking in the street and in public places. NO FOOD- NO SMOKING- NO PETS... then we read: "Violators will be prosecuted" ... It is perhaps a little ridiculous but little by little these external signs are becoming the standard of our behavior since indeed they often make good sense. Our freedom is thus seen as the possibility of doing everything except what is stated.

I dream that one day these signs will be replaced by a warning of the Presence: "I AM THERE". A warning which will let us see reality, not in a statement of the possible and the forbidden, but rather in a declaration of friendship. A declaration in which my relationship to the Mystery present in all things is finally exalted. This declaration thus encourages respect, attention, and understanding everywhere and for every being.

It is no longer a question of seeing what is forbidden, but of constantly engaging in an internal encounter with the Presence closest to your heart. This loving Presence, who, if we falter, will restore our freedom while granting His infinite mercy to us for as long as we so desire.

News from Heart's Home in the Bronx

"We sometimes spend long hours surveying the streets of the Bronx, only to find one person or another who, for many different reasons, cannot talk to us that day, or we go from room to room at the hospital, meeting with numerous refusals because everyone is too tired or sick to see us... And amidst these fruitless visits, suddenly there is the miracle, that miraculous meeting which often moves us to the depths of our being.

I remember this young woman that I ran into as we were about to return home after a visit to one of the hospitals we go to. I smiled at her as I was walking past her, and suddenly she grabbed me and started shouting: "I want to go home... I want to see my children again... I am capable of taking care of them!... My boyfriend left me after infecting me with AIDS. Why did he do that? I phone my mom every day, but she never answers!..." I continued to listen to her for a good while as she shouted about all her suffering, her powerlessness, her loneliness... But in the end, she calmed down and we stared at each other for a moment. I had no response to give to her cries except for my presence, all that I am, my heart, my prayers... She ended up smiling and even laughing at the few words I managed to say to her.

I still think of Mary, whom we visit in this same hospital each Friday and who spends her days sitting at the edge of her bed...She is blind and at the beginning did not speak to us at all. She lets us sit by her side for a little while and listens to us, sometimes nodding her head or even revealing a smile. What was the story behind this face? Who was she? We were faced with a mystery. And then one day, as if awakening from a long silence,



Alex, Emmanuel, Agnes and Gonzague

She asked us questions and responded to ours... An exchange was possible, and here again a miracle took place. We know Mary a little more now; she has allowed us to enter her heart and her life. Each true encounter, where a mask is lifted, where the heart is bared, is a miracle because it gives us the opportunity to join another in his most profound truth, in that place where we become one. *Man is a being who has in his heart a mystery greater than himself. His inner heart is his disposition, his ability to listen, his perception, and the will to give himself to a greater being, to accept a deeper truth, to surrender to a more patient love. (Urs von Balthasar).*"

Sr. Regine

Bye, Alexander!

"After a year at Heart's Home in the Bronx, I will go back to France on October 30.

I will never forget this year rich in joy and beautiful encounters. I warmly thank Fr. Thierry and my sponsors for allowing me to live this wonderful experience.

Above all, I praise God, for His love endures forever!"

Alexander

Welcome, Sr. Albane & Denis!

At the end of October, the Heart's home team in the Bronx will be welcoming 2 new members: Sister Albane, from the Servants of Jesus and Mary (Sr Blandine and Sr Regine's congregation), and Denis.

Sister Albane, a former Heart's Home missionary in Peru, joined the Servants of Jesus and Mary after working as an engineer for 2 years.

Denis comes to us from France. After working for two years for a major retail chain, he decided to take some time off to dedicate himself to the service of God and the poorest through Heart's Home.

We are looking forward to having them both with us, and to introduce them to you!

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HHUSA is a 501(c)3 organization.

Thank you for your support.



Focus on Heart's Home in Lima, Peru

On September 29, Megan McInnis left her California home for 14 months of mission with Heart's Home in Lima, Peru. We thought this was a good opportunity to introduce you to the work of Heart's Home in Peru, and to share with you the testimonies of the Heart's Home missionaries she joined there.



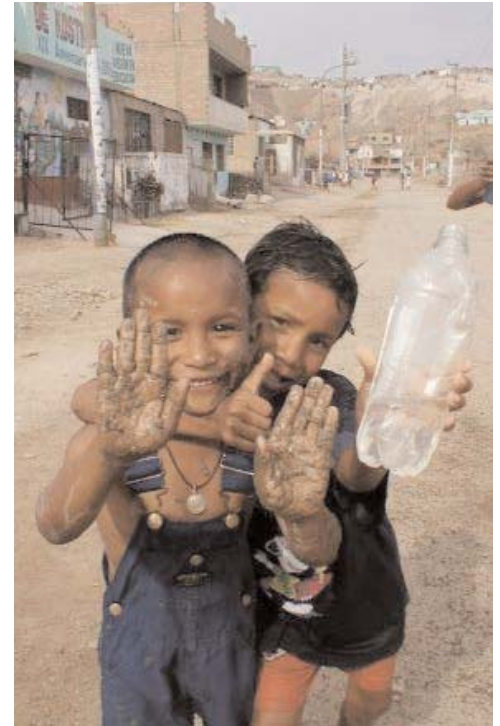
Testimony of Patrice, missionary in Barrios Altos, Lima

"For some time, we have not had a minute to ourselves in the community. Our friends, with their problems, come to unload their baggage. There is Licette, a twenty-two-year-old friend, who was kicked out of her house because she had a fight with her mother. There is also our second apostolate on Saturday, Alfredo, who has some problems taking care of himself and who thus comes each week for a shave (generally by Lorenzo) and to take a shower at Heart's Home. He doesn't have water at his place, and his problems seem endless. One has to smile at Alejandro because he lives in the street and asks only for a little human warmth. And all this with a catastrophic lack of sleep because we are awakened at 6am by the temple across the street, which blasts its music to get us up

every morning. We receive the grace to have faith, and your prayers help sustain us, much more than you can imagine.

Here another form of poverty is child labor. A more appropriate way to describe this would be "crime against the rights of the child".

One evening, I was waiting for a friend at Army Plaza when a seven-year-old boy approached me, asking if I wanted some candy. I began by asking him his first name. It was "Luis". And intrigued that I would rather talk to him than buy candy, Luis sat down beside me and started a conversation that really touched me. His father had gone off with another woman two months before, leaving him alone with his mother and one-year-old brother.



In Lima, where Megan is volunteering

Luis goes to school from 7:30am to 1:30pm, and from 3pm to 10pm he sells candy to tourists. The term "little man" is especially appropriate for him because his childhood has already been taken away to make room for the man that he shouldn't have become until much later.

How many children work in the streets from the age of six to help feed their family?

But still, one might say, he has his mother! I believe that, after a half hour, Luis was just as happy not to have sold any candy, because he had found a friend to listen to his problems and to be a presence for him."

Spreading the word about Heart's Home

"At the end of September, Sister Regina, Emmanuel and I went to Chicago for a week to raise awareness about the work of Heart's Home. We spent the first half of the week attending Volunteer Fairs in several Catholic Universities including: Loyola, DePaul University, Notre Dame and Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI.

These fairs gave us the opportunity to meet with a lot of students and talk to them about our volunteer opportunities. We also shared our experiences with several other volunteer organizations present there. In the second half of the week, we gave our testimonies at mass, to members of a young adult group, on the radio, as well as during two fundraising dinners. Everywhere we went, we were moved by the generosity of the people we met, as well as by their interest in our work. It is our hope that this trip will awaken a desire in many young people to join Heart's Home. We will surely keep all the individuals we encountered during this trip in our hearts and prayers."

Laetitia

If you are interested in spreading the word about Heart's Home to your Church, or College, or introducing us to your pastor or chaplain, please contact us.

Facts

- Heart's Home opened a first center in 1991 in La Ensenada, a deprived area located 20 miles from Lima.
- In 1994, a second center was established downtown Lima, in a neighborhood called Barrios Altos.
- The two teams of Heart's Home missionaries serve an average of 150 family each. They visit on a regular basis a center for abandoned children and adult with special needs, a prison for minors and several nursing homes.