

Parish of SANTA TERESA DE JESUS

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GUAYAQUIL

Dear

I am not sure if it is the awareness of getting old that makes one become more aware of the brightness, enthusiasm and exuberance of youth. Well, here they are in the flesh, the McPherson sisters, all the way from Scotland, and now visiting Ecuador with one or more countries of Latin America in their minds. They came off the plane last night, docked their baggage and after an hour or so they were off to see the town. You now know what I mean. Tomorrow morning they are off to conquer, Guayaquil, a city of 5.3 million. They will do the city in a day and then there are further goals to be conquered.



After a day or two correct names will be supplied!

THE EARTHQUAKE: still occupies the minds of the people here. Over twenty three thousand people lost their employment; three cities are in ruins and although many are in camps, which serve as temporary homes, many more are still in tents along the highway looking for donations of food or whatsoever from road users. With the price of oil plummeting and the rise in the price of the dollar exports from Ecuador are expensive. The country is going through a crisis.

What does he think of the Brexit decision?



What a joy to receive word from my nephew Callum announcing a newcomer to the family. He did not mention the name but, be that as it may, we are glad to congratulate Callum and Teri on their first baby. May he continue to be a bundle of joy in the home!

SOLIDARITY

I don't know if I mentioned the theme before but on Sunday we launched a new project in order to help the poor and destitute. We have divided the parish in twelve sectors. Each sector has a team of three or more people to collect foodstuffs and deliver it to the chapel house where it will be divided out into bags and then delivered to poor people. Driving through the town you don't become aware of much dire poverty. However, the lots here are very big, 25X80 yards (The original idea was that individual families would have hens, pigs, and seasonal crops, fruit trees for basic sustenance). What has happened is that small rooms for renting, which in time became family homes, are packed behind the main house with access through a narrow alleyway. The poor are to be found hidden behind relatively affluent housing.

EUROPE NO MORE

Horrified, nauseated, scandalized! That was my reaction to the decision to leave European Union. What a crazy decision! People have taken leave of their senses. Is this the England that historically crossed seas and continents to spread their rule over the length and width of the world? Has England become a selfish, insular, racist conglomerate with no moral fiber? With no consideration for world peace? With no respect for the ideals inherent in a united Europe? Indifferent to the possible consequences, the chaos which it will cause to the member states of the European Union? Uncaring and insensitive to the turmoil it will cause in the world economy at a time when greed should be replaced by solidarity if further hardship is to be avoided amongst the poorer nations. That section of the population won over by cheap demagoguery will rue the day but the older population, who gave no thought to the younger generations, will be able to live on their fat bank accounts. The young baby born today will have to live with this decision for the next eighty or ninety years. What a prospect!

I have to confess that I was rather indifferent to the referendum for Scottish independence of over a year ago. Now my reaction is that talks with Brussels must begin immediately. If Wales and Northern Ireland want to join, all the better. The British Isles is in a political mess because basic human principles and virtues have been ignored; because solidarity as a value system has been discarded. (I do not argue that perfection was to be found in the European Union but I do maintain that it strove for human ideals). I have a life conviction that we were created by God as one human family and that we have responsibility one for another; that politics should be a work of service and not a calculation of how best to retain power; that to live and act with dignity and uprightness is a duty for all. When all of that is denied we have to be brave and take other paths. I want to see Scotland in the European Union; I want to see Wales and Northern Ireland in the same union if that is what they want. My argument is not political but rather ethical and moral. For thirty years my voice has been raised in Ecuador against political, social and moral injustice. I have spoken out for social justice in the Ecuadorian Parliament; in the streets and on many other platforms. I only wish to add my voice to the voices that are raised at home.

BEACH – JUST ONE OF THE MANY LOVELY BEACHES IN ECUADOR



My sister in law, nieces Helen and Alana, will remember a couple of relaxing days spent on this beach. The weather is now cooler (or should be) the schools on the Highlands are on holiday and so many families come down from the much cooler Highlands to spend time on the coastal beaches. Schools on the coast have a different timetable from those on the Highlands. Heavy rains are expected from late December till late March and as many of the rural schools would be water logged, or roads impassable during these months, the coastal children are on holiday.

I will leave you. I hope that people will reflect on what is happening on the political scene; will be discerning as to which politicians are committed to serving the people and which are in the job to line their pockets and attain power and influence in the country. The future of Scotland has to be considered very seriously and decisions should be made based on serious analysis and not on cheap demagoguery. Good luck to serious thinkers and serious doers.

God bless,

Fr Colin

