

EDITORIAL

La Salette

VISION & MISSION



By Fr. Thomas Vellappallil, ms

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Dear Co-missioners,

Pope Francis is making his mark as one Catholic Church's more humble Popes by eschewing luxurious vestments in favor of simple white robes, as well as staying in modest housing instead of the Papal apartments, and using a Ford Focus instead of the Mercedes Benz.

He has also made a number of decisive statements about the importance of humility, urging solidarity with the poor and needy, and chose the name "Francis" to evoke St. Francis of Assisi, who stands for peace, austerity, and poverty. "I would like a Church that is poor and is for the poor" Pope Francis said following his election as head of the world's 1.2 million Catholics. He said, "the Roman Catholic Church must strip itself of all vanity, arrogance and pride and humbly serve the poorest in society." He believes that all of us should divest ourselves of worldliness. Because he says, "Worldliness kills souls, kills people, kills the Church." Through his article, Fr. Norman reflects Pope's wisdom in action in his mission in Argentina. He believes that educating the poor can bring about hope for the future in their lives.



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With letters and words, a new hope is born....

Reading-writing meetings in Villa Esquiú and El Quebrachal

In the communities of Our Lady of the Valley in Villa Esquiú and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Quebrachal we have set up spaces for the people in both communities to learn how to read and write. The program is run thanks to the initiative of the catechists, and within the framework of the development of Parish Projects, with the intervention of the Mental Health Team, and the support and supervision of the Pastor and priests of the La Salette Congregation.



Some youth and adults feel the need to finish their elementary school education. Most of those who manifest this need are women who work on the farms of the area and have school age children, so it would be difficult for them to concur at the night schools for adults.

While working with the children in preparation for the sacraments, the catechists discovered that this project was truly necessary. The goal is to achieve the certificate of reading-writing as proposed by the National Ministry of Education through the Office for the Education of Youth and Adults. We formed two literacy centers with the objective of helping our people who participate in the program, get their corresponding official certificate. Those who coordinate each group are Silvina in Villa Esquiú and Paola in Quebrachal.



“The reading-writing Project”, as we have named it here in villa Esquiú enables me to put into action the gift that God has given me; the gift of teaching. What a great feeling to be able to help a neighbor to feel better about himself or herself and to be able to get along better in life. Cooperating in this way with my community I feel very happy and sense that I am united with Jesus a bit more.” Silvina tells us.

There were difficulties: organizing the spaces for the daily work, taking care of the children and the distances participants had to walk to get to the program, but the willpower and the desire to learn were stronger. *“Little by little we forged ahead; we got to know each other, we talked and got the group together.”*

In **Villa Esquiú**, there were seven women eager to learn to read and write, and there were four women disposed to teach them. The teachers in turn would learn from the wisdom and life experience of their students. In **El Quebrachal** three women and two men participate. Here the meetings take place at the end of the participants’ work-day, that is after 8 PM, because there is no other time. Both centers work together, interchanging experiences and coordinating activities. There are two meetings weekly. As mentioned above, along with letters and words, there was a sharing of life experience.. While drinking coffee and tea, the students spoke about their native land, Bolivia. They spoke about their farm work here in Argentina. Meanwhile their kids played.

When we ask them: *Have you gone to school before? When? Why did you stop going? Why do you want to learn to read and write? How does it help you to learn more?...* This is when the first tears appeared. There are many answers to these questions, all of them are stories of a lot of work, a lot of sadness for what could not be accomplished in childhood. Some have difficulties managing their lives even now, others have learned by themselves in order to help their children during their first years in primary school, but want and need to learn more. With pride we observe the effort and dedication they show in every encounter. Their words are an example for each one of us.



In each story there is hope for a life worth living and a better future. These women show wisdom in every word. We value their dedication as mothers who support their children and struggle to give them a good education. They are courageous and dedicated women committed to head down a new road.

Testimonies

I'm Natalia

"I want to tell you about my experience now that I am studying to finish my primary school education being I really need it in every way in my life. I am very happy, I am very motivated to continue to finish primary school. It is very nice, I am learning many things and will continue thanks to the people who are helping me, they are very good. I would like to say to all those who have not finished elementary school that they should do so because it is very important. I am doing it and you can too, if you want to finish, you can. Don't be afraid or ashamed, it's never too late to learn or to study. Thanks be to God I met the people who are helping me and I am very glad."

I'm Ana

"Thanks to the Literacy Program we have professors who help those of us who never had the opportunity to study. Thanks to professors Silvina, Violeta, Viviana and Sandra who teach us to advance with our studies. I am happy because each day I feel that I am learning a little more. From the start I thought that I would never have the opportunity to learn to read and write, that's why I think that anyone who was not able to study or didn't have the opportunity can now fulfill their desire to do so. I want to say that anyone can study and age makes no difference."

"We all know something, yet we have a lot we don't know. That is why we can always learn."

Paulo Freire



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