

PARROQUIA DE
NUESTRA SENORA DE LAS MERCEDES

EL PROGRESO, YORO
HONDURAS, C.A.

Easter
March 26, 1967

Dear Virginia, Ken, and kids,

May Christ, our Savior, by the merits of His Passover from death to Life, lead us safely through our own Passover through suffering and death to the Life eternal! I'm sending this carbon copied letter to you all this beautiful Holy Sat. day because I owe you all a letter for some time. Yesterday, Good Fri., is the big day for the Latin Catholics. We go right through the actions of Jesus in processions using a life-sized image of Christ with movable arms, legs and head. Thurs. night we have the procession of silence for men only accompanying Christ tied up and led captive. About 1000 men went in this in perfect order at 11:00 pm.

Then yesterday, Fri. am. We take Christ carrying His cross in the Via Crucis through the long streets of Progreso again with the Stations on about every other corner in the street on altars the people fix up. This ends at high noon in the church where they literally nail the image to the cross and there it stays till after the liturgy of Good Fri. At 4:00pm they take Christ down from the cross and in the biggest procession of the year we walk through the whole town to the little chapel we have past the cemetery to leave the body there till Easter morn. procession of the resurrected Christ bright and early at 5:30 am.

The whole town more or less get in these processions, and love them, and so we can't squelch them, even though I don't think much of them. It's just a big fiesta for most of the crowd. Maybe 10,000 people are in the burial procession. Tom Quiery, our pastor, has done a fine job of organizing and controlling all this. He and I are alone for everything in the parish. Fr. John Waters has been helping a little with the confessions in holy week is all. We have 65,000 ignorant, starving Catholics in our parish with 2 priests. It's a crime the Mo. Province doesn't send us more missionaries.

I spend a lot of time now in the social apostolate besides giving the sacraments in the 80 villages I have. I've helped 9 villages start small coops to try to solve the number one problem in Hond. which land for the poor campesinos. We hope to make them agricultural coops, buying land together and working it together in brotherhood. This is a fine way to get across the basic Christian doctrine of living like brothers in one Family of God. I desperately need help with these coops and other community development projects we have. Not money, but missionaries, clerical or lay, with money to support them. We have the Peace corps around here but so far they have done me more harm than good with their gringo ideas.

We are further than ever away from having effective agrarian reform in Hond., it looks like. The National Association of Campesinos is plotting a hunger strike for May 1, with about 40,000 people in it. Maybe this will wake the gov't. up a little to the hunger and injustice and need for agrarian reform. Honduras is progressing quite rapidly economically in some aspects, but it just means that the rich are getting richer, while the poor are getting poorer. This is a great place to be working for the Kingdom of Chris - plenty to do. And we are assured that His Kingdom will come - Christ has conquered and rules. He has sent His Spirit of Love into men's hearts. Now it is up to us to keep up the good fight for justice and love and union in the world.