

Peru



Facts (from the CIA World Fact Book, 2008):

- Population:
 - 28.7 million
 - 44.5% are below the poverty line
 - 81% are Roman Catholic
 - 88% of the people age 15 and older, can read and write
- Geography
 - Land area of 1.28 million sq km (slightly smaller than Alaska)
 - Climate is tropical in the east, dry desert in the west, temperate to frigid in the Andes Mountains
 - Natural hazards are earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, landslides, and mild volcanic activity
- Independence Day is July 28 (from Spain in 1821)
- Labor force of 9.4 million is in agriculture (9%), industry (18%), services (73%)
- Unemployment rate is 7.4% in Lima; elsewhere widespread underemployment
- 6.1 million internet users

Our Families' Environment in Piura

The department (county) of Piura is in northern Peru, just south of Ecuador. Though 66% of Peru is forests and woodlands, Piura is mainly desert, receiving a couple inches of rain a year.

The families we sponsor in Piura are very poor, but are happy and have a strong faith. The poorest of the poor are the ones for whom the missionaries build homes. A new home built by the missionaries has 3 rooms, with walls of bamboo sheets held together by wire ties and bamboo poles. The roof of the home is of corrugated cardboard; the front is thin plywood, with a lightweight tin door. Some people may paint or otherwise decorate the plywood, so their home looks a bit different from the others in the neighborhood. Homes are usually built just a couple of inches apart, except in the remote farm areas. The cost of materials to build each home is about \$450.

There are two smaller rooms, usually used as bedrooms, with one long room being more of an open area. The kitchen is out back, sometimes within some type of shelter. There is a fire pit for cooking, and a few pots and pans stored on the side. Generally, there is a clothesline by the kitchen, and sometimes a few plants. The homes have no bathrooms, though some families have constructed a small outhouse in the backyard.

A few homes have running water, and electricity is beginning to be available in some communities. However, the cost to hook up to electric is prohibitive for most families. It is not unusual to see an extension cord running between houses, the family with electricity willing to provide light at night for their neighbor.

The floors are dirt, but are swept regularly to keep the house clean. Families sometimes pour water outside the front of the home, to keep the dust down and out of the house. Cardboard boxes are flattened and attached to bamboo walls to help keep out the cool night air; pages from magazines do the same, plus add color to the home.

Most homes have one or two small bed frames with a thin mattress and a blanket; some families may have bed sheets. The majority of homes have several holy pictures decorating the walls.

The people of Piura receive much of their clothing from U.S. donations of used clothing. This means that clothes and shoes don't necessarily fit well. But, these people are so excited and grateful to receive the clothes, shoes, blankets! Folks generally have footwear, though they are primarily sandals and rubber flip-flops.

With the exception of an occasional ball or doll, there are few toys. And, there are few playgrounds for children – public, private, or schoolyard. Public schools also do not have many books (when they have them at all), and there are no school supplies provided by the government. The people of Piura rely on donations of any school supplies – pencils, crayons, paper.

Country saints are:

- St. Rose of Lima, patron of florists and gardeners
- St. Martin de Porres, patron of social justice and public education

Please go to Santisimo Sacramento Parish website to get a better idea of their world!

<http://www.santisimo.org/us-principal.htm>

Sponsor Process

Please make your check out to the **St. Joseph Peruvian Mission Fund**. Note on your check, your sponsored family number (located on the bottom of your family's Information Sheet). While our preference is for one annual payment in the amount of \$300 plus \$10 for translation service, you may pay semi-annually (\$150) or quarterly (\$75)*. Checks (**no cash**) must be received before the **25th of the month**. Your contribution should be mailed to Fran or Ginni. Please do not drop off at the rectory or in the Sunday collection basket.

Fran Balistreri
5675 Hanssen Rd.
Gurnee, IL 60031

Ginni Kerpan Andersen
4978 Shagbark Ct.
Gurnee, IL 60031

** Please note that if you are unable to make a payment during a month, or it is late, your family will not receive a food delivery.*

St. Pat's Family-to-Family committee sends all checks to the St. Joseph Peruvian Mission Fund in Oklahoma, identifying the families of Blessed Sacrament Parish (Parroquia Santisimo Sacramento) to receive the support. As all administrative costs of this fund are donated, 100% of your donation goes to your sponsored family!

Once a month, employees of Parroquia Santisimo Sacramento will make a delivery to your family. A typical delivery consists of rice, lentils, pasta, vegetable oil, flour, evaporated milk, and occasionally a plastic bin or a wool blanket. The families feel so blessed to know that someone is willing to be so generous and to care for them. It gives them hope and keeps their faith strong. St. Pat's missionaries assist on these deliveries during the annual mission trip to Piura. The support of your family is greatly appreciated.

Your contribution is fully deductible as allowed by law, and you will receive a donation statement directly from St. Joseph's Peruvian Mission Fund. This is a non-profit organization whose mission is dedicated to improving the health, education, and welfare of the 30,000 people of Piura, Peru.

Does your employer have a Company Gift Matching program?

If so, your contribution may qualify for additional funds to be provided to Blessed Sacrament Parish. Please pursue this avenue with your employer!

If you have any questions on the program, please feel free to contact one of the following St. Pat's F2F Committee members:

Fran Balistreri
oofran@aol.com
847-336-4332

Ginni Kerpan Andersen
gckerpan@kerpan.com
847-623-3312

We are grateful for your sponsorship!

Gifts / Additional Help for Your Family

If you would like to send extra money, to be designated for specific needs or in general, for whatever the family may need, you may do so. Just follow the Sponsor Process on the previous page, adding a note on how you want the extra donation to be applied (e.g., "For whatever the family needs").

To see a current price list on items generally needed by our families, go to:
<http://www.santisimo.org/christmas/us-christmasorderform.htm>

If you choose to send a donation "for whatever the family needs", the Blessed Sacrament parish employees who administer this program will visit the family, find out what their needs are, purchase the items, and deliver them.

Whatever you choose to do, your family will know it is from you, and will give thanks to God for their padrino and madrina (godfather and godmother)!

Communicating with Your Family

Communication with your family is so important to them! Pictures of their American family are treasured; pictures are always placed prominently in their homes. While your financial support sustains them physically it is your letters/emails that provide hope & encouragement to continue on in their daily lives.

The fastest and easiest way to send a letter or picture is via email. The email is sent to Blessed Sacrament and they will print it and deliver it to the Peruvian family (usually the following month when the next food delivery is made).

You may write in Spanish or English, but be aware that with online translation your letter may be distorted and therefore not convey your intended message

For e-mail: pssacramentopiura@yahoo.com
In the Subject line, enter: Letter for St. Pat's Family # (xx)

For regular mail:

**Parroquia Santisimo Sacramento
Piura, Peru**

**Attn: St. Pat's Family # (xx)
Father's Full Name (or mother, if there is no father)
Village**

Regular mail generally takes about 8 days from the time you mail it; to the time the parish receives it. A parish employee then delivers it to the family, usually the following month when the next food delivery is made.

Your family will send you letters also; they will be scanned and emailed directly to your email address from the parish in Peru. If you do not use email, your letter will be emailed to Ray Hoven of St. Patrick parish; Ray will print and mail your letter to you. If you would like them to arrive translated from Spanish to English, please include the additional \$10 per year, to your sponsorship. A student in Peru studying English will receive money for each letter they translate; this wage will help them pay for their schooling.