



Frank Chamberlain, SJ, dances with parishioners during a festival celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Virgin of Nazareth parish in Lima's El Agustino neighborhood.

# The Chicago Peru Connection

FORTY-THREE YEARS OF SHARED SERVICE

by Frs. Kevin Gallagher, SJ, and Bob Beckman, SJ

After a luncheon held by *America* Magazine in 1958 at the Waldorf-Astoria to honor its associate editors and various American Provincials, an important conversation took place between Fr. Felipe MacGregor, SJ, and Fr. William J. Schmidt, SJ, then Provincial of the Chicago Province. For want of a better location, the two sat in the corridor leading to the dressing room of the Waldorf's famed chorus line. Women from that chorus line are probably the only witnesses, therefore, to the historic agreement forged in the corridor when Fr. MacGregor, the Vice-Provincial of the Peruvian Vice-Province of the Society and Fr. Schmidt agreed to partner the Chicago and Peru Provinces in order to better serve the Church in Latin America.

There's some background, though, to that conversation and agreement that's worth recalling. Just at that

time, Pope John XXIII was petitioning American religious orders and dioceses to think about sending 10 percent of their personnel to Latin America. The Chicago Province had already talked with Bolivia, but had not been able to come to an agreement about possible collaboration. Several other US Provinces were already talking with Latin American Provinces about collaboration: Maryland with Chile, Wisconsin with Argentina, and New Orleans with Brazil. That's when Fr. MacGregor, who despite his Scottish surname was a born Peruvian, entered the scene. He'd already consulted with the United States Assistant, Fr. Vincent McCormick, SJ, and was ready to make an agreement. And he did: in the span of a few minutes in a hotel hallway.

He then traveled from New York to Chicago to work out details. The Chicago Province would assume responsibility for the four southernmost *departamentos* (po-



Jesuits from the Chicago Province and the Peru Province who have served in Peru gathered during the ordination weekend: (front row) Bob Beckman, SJ, Isaac Vasquez, SJ, Bill Spine, SJ, Arsenio Munoz, SJ, Pablo Mora, SJ, (middle row) Bob Thul, SJ, Ernesto Cavassa, SJ, Jeremiah Lynch, SJ, Dick Baumann, SJ, Dan Hartnett, SJ, John P. Foley, SJ, (top row) Jim Collins, SJ, Matt Garr, SJ, Edwin Vasquez, SJ, Fred Bergewisch, SJ, Saturnino Orozco, SJ

litical provinces akin to States in the U.S.) of Peru, those closest to the Chilean border, but Jesuits of the Peruvian vice-province, most of whom were Peruvian and Spanish, would continue to work and live there. All of them would be under the jurisdiction of the Chicago Province. The Chicago Province agreed to supply as many Jesuits as possible: at first several priests and then two scholastics each year.

The Peruvian vice-province at the time had some 220 members, and was in the process of spreading out from Lima, where it was re-established in 1871 when the Society returned after the expulsion and suppression of 1767. The Society first arrived in the Spanish colony of Peru in the mid-sixteenth century and worked in many parts of the Peruvian-Bolivian altiplano. Perhaps its most famous early “work” was its contribution to the “Reductions,” the Paraguayan Jesuit mission serving the native populations whose communities and lives had been disrupted by the arrival of the Spanish colonists. The “Reductions” were subsequently made famous in the movie “The Mission.”

The Jesuits established Colegio San José in 1898 in Arequipa, the chief city in southern Peru. In the late 1950s, a Peruvian Jesuit in Arequipa, Fr. Carlos Pozzo, SJ, began a massive social apostolate called CIRCA in the burgeoning shanty towns beginning to appear there and in



Bob Beckman, SJ, Ernest McClear, SJ, the first Chicago Province Jesuit in Peru, and Jerry Bowman, SJ, outside Colegio San Jose in Arequipa, Peru, in 1961.

all major cities of Peru and the rest of the third world. In 1959 the Chicago Province dispatched Fr. Ernest V. McClear, SJ, a long-time professor of theology at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein who spoke Spanish, to reconnoiter in Peru and serve as the point man for the American Jesuits who would soon arrive to begin work in established ministries.

On October 28, 1960, the feast in Peru of the Lord of the Miracles, the first *destinados* of the Chicago Province arrived in Lima: Fr. Robert Beckman, SJ, Fr. Benjamin Morin, SJ, and Br. Luis Tomas, SJ (a Spanish Jesuit who had worked in Bolivia but was then assigned to the Chicago Province). They were based at Colegio San José in Arequipa and the newly acquired cathedral parish in Tacna. Having just completed a linguistic course at Georgetown University, Bob began work immediately in the school in Arequipa. Without any formal preparation in Spanish, Ben went to work in the parish in Tacna. Br. Tomas was assigned to Bolivia shortly after his arrival.

Fr. Fred Green, SJ, of the California Province, had arrived in Tacna in 1959 and signed the agreement by which the Jesuits took responsibility for the abandoned cathedral parish there. He went to Argentina for tertianship, and in 1960 returned to Tacna where he spent the next 42 years, becoming a legend in that then small town. As the city grew exponentially, Fred created new works to keep pace. In 1962, Fr. William Cetnar, SJ, already a pioneer in the founding of St. Joseph Mission School within the confines of Holy Family Parish in Chicago, arrived in Tacna, took over the job of pastor in the cathedral parish, and pushed for the creation of the Cristo Rey School. Fr. Fred was the school’s de facto founder and continued as

director and principal for more than 20 years. Fr. Jerry Bowman, SJ, arrived soon after making his tertianship in Colombia and went to Colegio San José in Arequipa, where he worked as director of the night division of San Jose until 1966 and then moved up into the altiplano of Peru to found Cristo Rey parish in the booming commercial town of Juilaca, 13,000 feet above sea level.

In 1961, Loyola University Chicago “lent” Fr. Henry J. Wirtenberger, SJ, dean of its business school, to the newly created Universidad del Pacifico in Lima, which the Society co-founded with a group of lay trustees. Fr. Wirtenberger helped lay the groundwork for the school’s program of studies, and it has since become one of the most prestigious business schools of Latin America.

In the early ’60s, the Chicago Province began sending Jesuit scholastics to the Peruvian Province for the juniorate, a three-year program of philosophy studies in Lima. The first arrivals were Jerry Wesselkamper, who later left the Society, and Fr. William Spine, SJ, who now serves in a predominantly Hispanic parish in Lexington, KY. This program brought roughly 30 scholastics to Peru to study with young Peruvian and Spanish Jesuits. It turned out to be a providential policy, quickly accelerating the integration of the Chicago presence into the Peruvian Province and its works. A slight variation took place in the mid ’60s. Young Jesuits began coming to Peru as “regents,” after they’d completed their studies in philosophy. Following a three to four month language course, they began to work in Peru. They usually stayed for three years.

In those early years, in addition to the founding of Cristo Rey in Tacna and the beginning of the parish in Juliaca, a new primary-school building was constructed at San José in Arequipa, where Bob Beckman served as rector and director. During that time the secondary school also doubled in size, thanks to a controversial scholarship program successfully implemented by “Padre Roberto.”

In 1968 the Chicago Province turned over control of the Southern Territory to Peru. In 1973, Fr. Ricardo Morales, SJ, was appointed Provincial of Peru by Father General and, by common agreement, the two territories were merged into a single province. The Jesuits from Chicago, who had been concentrated in the Southern part of the country, were soon being assigned to works in any and every part of the Peruvian Province. 1973 also marked the first “convenio” agreement between the Chicago and Peru Provinces. These agreements, renewed and modified over the years, have governed the relationship between the two Provinces. At present, the Chicago Jesuits working in Peru think of themselves more as “Peruvian Jesuits,” no matter what their personal jurisdictional relation with the Peruvian Province or the Chicago Province.

These Chicago men serve in a variety of works and places in the Peruvian Province. In general, each has found

his own “niche.” Fr. Edward P. Schmidt, SJ (“the other Ed Schmidt”), has been teaching business ethics for 30 years at the Universidad del Pacifico in Lima, in the footsteps of Fr. Wirtenberger. Fr. Schmidt is currently preparing the fourth edition of his second textbook on business ethics. He’s traveled to colleges and universities in the United States, Spain, and Latin America to speak on the topic of business ethics. Fr. Jeffery “Jeff” Klaiber, SJ, has been teaching Peruvian history at the Catholic University in Lima for 20 years. He’s an authority on the social history of the Catholic Church in Peru and of the country’s leading political party, APRA. Fr. Pat Casey, SJ, is presently rector of San Jose School in Arequipa and has worked in three of the main schools of the Province. Fr. James O’Leary, SJ, the last Jesuit from the Chicago Province to be assigned indefinitely to Peru, took over as principal of the Fe y Alegria School in Jaen, a city in the northeast of the country, after having served for a number of years in Fe y Alegria’s central office. Anthropologist Fr. James “Jaime” Regan, SJ, originally of the Detroit Province, has served on the Bishops’ research and pastoral agency for the native peoples of the extensive Peruvian jungle for the last 25 years. He also teaches religious studies to Protestant ministers at the large state university in Lima.

Another anthropologist, Fr. Matt Garr, SJ, has been working for ten years as adjunct-director of the Bishops’ Office for Social Action, after years of pastoral and investigative work in various parts of the Peruvian highlands. Fr. Frank Chamberlain, SJ, serves as pastor of El Agustino, a gigantic parish in one of Lima’s shanty towns. He has worked extensively in province planning and is generally recognized as the Province’s “expert” on the social dimension of evangelizing work—a dimension, it must be remembered, which remains at the heart of Jesuit activity in Latin America. In 1976, Fr. Beckman founded the Center for Ignatian Spirituality in Lima, where he continues to serve today. Fr. Charles “Charlie” Murtaugh, SJ, has been engaged in pastoral work for more than 20 years at the Society’s lower-middle-class parish Nuestra Senora de los Desamparados just off downtown Lima. Fr. Gallagher, for 20 years, coordinated the 50 Peruvian schools in the Fe y Alegria network, and has just finished his term as rector of Colegio de la Inmaculada.

Fr. Kevin Flaherty, SJ, is a true renaissance man. A psychologist by trade, he works with young Jesuits of the Province, is in charge of vocation promotion, teaches theology courses, and directs retreats. Fr. Bob Dolan, SJ, who’s just finishing a six-year stint at Colegio de la Inmaculada in Lima, has long been dedicated to pastoral work with particular emphasis on Ignatian spirituality. He can lay claim to being one of the few Jesuits who had direct and dangerous contact with the violent Sendero Luminoso terrorist group in the ’80s, when he served as pastor in the central highlands. Recently Fr. Dolan translated *Do you Speak Ignatian?* (a book by Fr. George Traub, SJ, of Xavier University) into Spanish. The translated version is



Kevin Flaherty, SJ, preaches on a hilltop overlooking Lima. Jesuits running the parish in Lima's El Agustino neighborhood travel by motorbike weekly to offer liturgies, very often in neighborhoods like this one where there are no physical churches.

being used not only throughout Latin America but also among Hispanics in the United States. Fr. John Ross Sima, SJ, returned to Peru last year after serving for several years at St. Ignatius Parish in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. He's in Arequipa and has returned to work in spirituality, including his famous "Retreats with Clay."

Several Jesuits from the Chicago Province who worked many years in Peru have now returned to Chicago. Fr. Benjamin Morin, SJ, who worked for 30 years with Fr. Pozzo in Arequipa's social action apostolate CIRCA, returned to the U.S. for health reasons several years ago and now resides at Colomiere Center in Clarkston, MI. Fr. Daniel Hartnett, SJ, who served as an associate pastor in El Agustino parish in Lima and director of a social-action NGO, has returned to Loyola University Chicago. His last assignment in Peru was as superior and professor at the juniorate in Lima, where he was also one of the founders of the Escuela Superior Ruiz de Montoya, now being converted into a university, so it should come as no surprise that he presently teaches social ethics at Loyola and serves as academic director of the Jesuit First Studies Program there. Fr. John P. Foley, SJ, held important posts in three of Peru's primary-secondary schools for more than 30 years, and is now "on loan" to the Chicago Province where he's president and founder of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School on the south side of Chicago. He remains closely associated, though, with the Center for the Working Child he began in Tacna before his return to the States. Fr. Fred Bergewisch, SJ, who volunteered to come to Peru at the time many of his peers were retiring, spent years teaching seminary students in Arequipa, hearing confessions, and directing others in the Spirit

ual Exercises before returning to Loyola University where he continues to serve in pastoral ministry.

The Jesuits in Peru have been blessed with tremendous lay collaborators, one of whom, Paul Lammermeir, moved down to Peru from Cincinnati fifteen years ago. Since then he's taught at Colegio Francisco Javier, created an orphanage, and set up a home-grown exchange program with students from the United States.

There's no doubt these 43 years of cooperation between the two Provinces have been an instance of the Jesuits' own globalization process. The many interactions between the two Provinces and the many associated laypeople have undoubtedly moved us toward the "uni-

versal common good" of which John XXIII talked in his 1963 encyclical *Pacem en Terris*.

The generosity of the Chicago Province has been outstanding: it sent some 45 of its Jesuits to Peru over the years, and has been prodigal with financial support. It's been a training ground for Jesuits from Peru who have gone to language or graduate studies there. The twinning between St. Francis Xavier Parish in downtown Cincinnati and El Agustino parish in Lima is just one example of the close cooperation that exists between the two Provinces. The prayers and extraordinary generosity of the many lay friends and donors in the U.S. and Peru have made it possible for the ministries here to best serve God's people.

Peru, for its part, has cooperated graciously. It received with patience, tolerance, and warmth those first Chicago Jesuits in October of 1960. Over the years it's opened its houses and works to many visiting groups of U.S. Jesuits and students from Chicago Province universities and high schools. From time to time it's also sent a Jesuit from Peru for some specialized work in the Chicago Province, not to mention those currently "on loan" there.

Congratulations from all of us here to all of you on your 75th anniversary. We are very aware, also, of your support for Patna and Nepal—another example of Jesuit globalization, whose potentiality the Society of Jesus is just beginning to appreciate and act on.

As a way of concluding, let us turn to Ignatius himself. In his Exercises, he counsels "*En todo amar y servir*," which translates to "In all things, to love and serve." Our prayers at this time are for both Provinces—and through them the entire *Compania de Jesus*—to continue the adventure that is the Kingdom of God. ■