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Dear

In my last parish of Anconcito I remember one year when we could honestly say that it had not rained at any point during the year – a few precious drops and nothing more. I would be praying for a little rain to keep the dust down! My world here is different. As I go to bed at night, as I waken in the morning, the rain comes pelting down. The feeling of rejection grows as I think of so many families in the earthquake zone who have been living in makeshift tents, of mud landslides washing houses and families into the river, of so many small towns being isolated as roads are washed away. It is so very sad and the country is not in a healthy economic position to do anything much about it. As the same time the people are resilient.



BREXIT AND ALL THAT

Is Teresa May on the same course for destroying human and moral principles in Britain as President Trump is in America? Their style is remarkably similar and this was confirmed by Teresa May regarding it as a personal triumph to be the first head of State to visit President Trump in Washington. There are different styles of leadership: one that chooses a firm line, positing it as the unique and exclusive way ahead, ignoring

other alternatives. A democratic leader is concerned about serving all interests possible. It seems that May is not this latter type of leader (just as Trump is not) and both consider themselves sole proprietors of truth.

HOLY WEEK



Some of you will know that I formed a lay missionary Association. Before joining the Association applicants have a year's training and from then on weekly study sessions. Every week they go out to outlying areas to catechise. Religious knowledge is at a very low ebb here. For this Holy Week, a big group of them are going to areas which have no priests. They will do the Holy Week services in these villages and be housed and feed by the population.

Above you can see a group in training. Consuelo, the missionary who works with me, uses modern and participative methods of teaching - song, action and laughter are essential ingredients of her method.

SPORT Glad to hear of the Scottish win over Slovenia. The rugby team did not do so badly either. Will they hold out against England?

PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION



Processions have a fascination for the people here and Holy Week is a time to process in style. One of the processions in the centre of the town can command a crowd in excess of 700,000. It is quite impressive to see the various floats, bands and choirs taking part. Good Friday is of particular importance and if there is a population of some 3 million people in Guayaquil I am sure that as many as 2 million take part in one procession or other, divided up in their different parishes. They might not go to Mass but they will be present at a traditional procession. It is the faith of the people.

ELECTIONS IN ECUADOR

For the Ecuadorean people politics is a very passionate activity. So much hangs on the success or failure of your party because the “hangers-on” who attend every meeting to applaud their hero, and travels the country to show how much support that particular politician has nationally expect a comfortable job afterwards or some sinecure or other till the next election comes about. The elections of Sunday, 2nd of April were closely fought. Exit polls proclaimed the victory of the opposition party but when it came to declaring the final vote the government party won. The cry of fraud was heard throughout the country and protests will be held nationally for a number of weeks. I fear that it will all be of no avail.

CLIMATE CHANGE

There is the saying that the person who refuses to see is the blindest of persons. To make that person see the situation in a different way is an almost impossible task. People and governments that see an advantage in ignoring climate change agreements in order to gain kudos with an ingenuous population find it inconvenient and therefore impossible to accept that the human being is destroying our planet and in a particular way affecting world climate. Trump is tearing apart climate agreements made at the Paris conference. Will Teresa May follow suit, ignore moral commitments already agreed, in a new selfish Britain which she wants to create. MAYbe!

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

The children here are on holiday and it is just as well as so many of the schools have been flooded, roads are in need of repair and the daily quota of rain which we receive would make it difficult to get to school. Here students have re-sits if they fail the end of the year exam and so a number are buried in their school books once again. Others are at loss because there are few sporting facilities in this part of the town and so they get “bored” – the modern ailment.

With that delightful note I leave you. May God bless you all and be pleased that spring will soon give way to summer. Summer has always a pleasant ingredient for most people.

Fr. Colin

