

# PAST STILL PRESENT

CPPS Archives Bulletin Issue 29, September 2017

## FOUNDATIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA

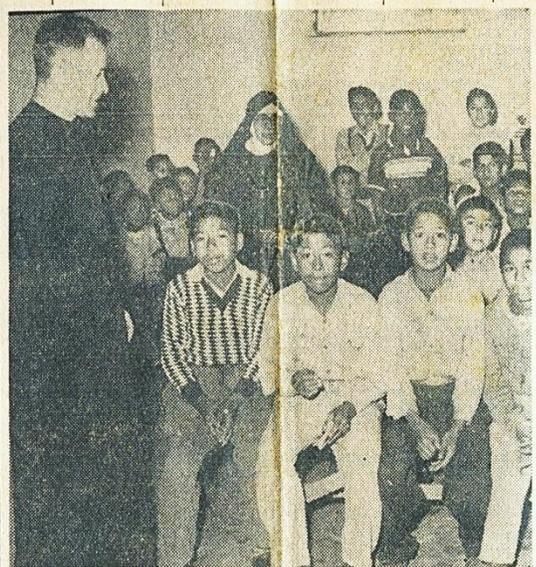
This August-September we mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation in Peru and two years later in Bolivia. But the decision had been made much earlier.

Note the date of this article from the *St. Louis Register* [former name for the *Review*]: **January 25, 1957**

VOL. XVII. No. 5. *St. Louis Register* January 25, 1957

### Second Overseas Assignment for O'Fallon Community

# Precious Blood Nuns To Establish Mission In Lima, Peru, Parish



For easier reading, the text of the article is reproduced here:

The Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon will establish a foreign mission in Lima, Peru, this fall.

Mother M. Lorenza Holtman, Superior General of the congregation, said three sisters of the order will open a parochial school in the new Parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Lima.

Although a city of some 800,000, nearly all of whom are baptized Catholics, Lima now has only two parochial schools. The Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish embraces some 60,000 families.

The mission will be the second foreign mission to be established by the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. Their first, in Helsingfors, Finland, was opened just prior to World War II.

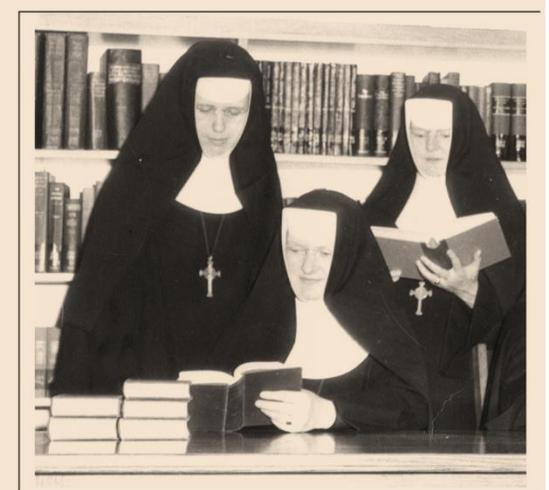
Mother Lorenza announced plans for the new mission yesterday, following her return from Lima. She was accompanied on her South American visit by Sister M. Alicia Dalton, Secretary General of the community order. The two nuns also visited the "Padres de San Luis," the three St. Louis archdiocesan priests who have established a mission in La Paz, Bolivia, before leaving South America.

The great number of demands made on motherhouses for more teaching sisters does not make it easy for the Precious Blood community to spare sisters for the South American assignment, the Superior General admitted. At present, she said she did not know specifically which sisters would staff the foreign mission....

**Nuns' Mission** The Rev. Thomas Garrity, M.M., is smiling on a group of his young parishioner who will be benefited by the establishment of a foreign mission in Lima, Peru, by the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Mo.

The sister in the photo is a member of a Spanish community which has been giving religious instructions on Sunday to the children in the new Parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Lima.

### St. Louis Review



Standing, from left: Sr. Mary Kevin [Doris] Rechiene, Sr. Agatha Marie Hanneken.  
Seated: Sr. Mary Fulgence Rascher

Although Mother Lorenza didn't know in January, 1957, who would be going to Peru, by summer the three sisters knew and were getting ready.

## A Precious Blood Vine Is Planted in Latin America by Sr. Doris Rechiene

In 1956 Pope Pius XII requested that all U.S. religious communities send members to Third World countries. At the same time the Maryknoll priests were searching for a community of sisters to staff a parish school in Lima, Peru. Sr. Lorenza Holtman, superior general, asked our congregation for volunteers. The response was great. When Sr. Lorenza told Bishop Ritter, Prelate of St. Louis, that we would three sisters to Peru, he answered: "I will give you permission to go to Peru, if you will also send sisters to Bolivia." Priests from the St. Louis Archdiocese had just been sent to La Paz, Bolivia. The sisters would serve with them.

Therefore, on August 30, 1957 Sisters Mary Fulgence Rascher, Agatha Marie Hanneken, and Mary Kevin (Doris) Rechiene set sail from New York on the Santa Maria. After a very eventful voyage, the sisters arrived on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1957, planting the Precious Blood of O'Fallon, Missouri, Vine in Latin American soil. Thus, the first branch began to sprout.



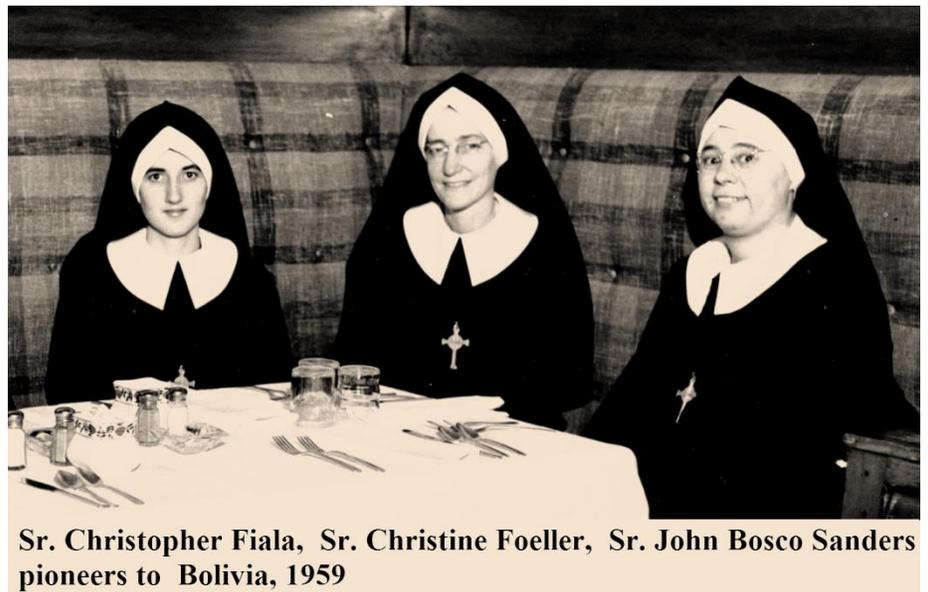
In 1959 Sisters Christine Foeller, Christopher Fiala, and John Bosco Sanders left for Bolivia, and Sr Josepha Bauer joined the thriving branch in Peru. After studying Spanish for a few weeks three sisters traveled to Bolivia to grow the second branch of the Latin American Precious Blood Tree.

Since 1957 many Precious Blood Sisters have been Christ's reconciling presence among the people of Latin America. They ministered in areas including: education, pastoral ministry, health care, parish school of religion, care of orphans, sewing, etc., as well as co-ops, formation for religious life and CPPS and Inter-Community programs. The sisters worked tirelessly with the indigenous people, always with a thrust toward empowering them. Many beautiful leaves have developed and grown since our Precious Blood Vine was planted in Peruvian soil on Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1957. Please help us thank God, during this anniversary year and every day, for God's many gifts and graces over these past 60 years of Precious Blood Presence in Latin America.

Sr. Josepha Bauer



Pioneers to Peru: Srs. Fulgence, Doris, & Agatha Marie



Sr. Christopher Fiala, Sr. Christine Foeller, Sr. John Bosco Sanders pioneers to Bolivia, 1959

The following text and pictures describe the **EARLY DAYS** as recorded in a photo album assembled by one of the sisters.

On August 31, 1957 three Sisters of the Precious Blood, Sister Agatha Marie Hanneken, Sister Mary Fulgence Rascher and Sister Mary Kevin (later known as Sister Doris) Rechiene set sail on the Santa Maria from New York on the long voyage to Lima, Peru. They were going to begin our first Latin American mission.



Father Thomas Garrity, M.M.

They landed in Callao, Peru, the seaport of Lima on Friday, September 13th. They were met at the seaport by Father Thomas Garrity, M.M., the pastor of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe Parish, Father Martin Murphy M.M., and the four superiors of the Immaculate Heart Sisters who then had four houses in Lima and Callao. Our Sisters were taken to Villa Maria, the first school of the Immaculate Heart Sisters. This became the first home of our Sisters because their house was not as yet finished. They remained here until December 12th when they were able to move to their own house.

Our dining area & community room



We arrived at the house that was destined to be our first real home on December 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. We had a little program in school in the morning and returned to Colegio Villa Maria where we awaited Father Garrity with suitcases in hand. We took possession of our house at about 4:00 p.m. The Sisters at Villa Maria brought us our meals for the next few days. About 8:00 p.m. Father came to bless our house. When he noticed our unmade beds we had to explain that we couldn't find our sheets in the many boxes and trunks that we had brought along. He went home and returned with sheets so we wouldn't have to spend any

more time looking for ours that night. Our home was on Palermo Street just one-half block from Avenida Mexico in the subdivision of Balconcillo. It is very near to a "red light area" so our Spanish teacher notified us that she would not teach us anymore. She did not want to be considered a "woman of the street."

Hardly had we arrived when Fr. Garrity asked us to prepare the Catechists who taught Religion to the public school children. In our faltering Spanish we did our best to prepare some High School girls to teach the younger children. We ourselves helped to teach the children in the outdoor chapel on Saturday afternoon and in a very poor sector of Mendocita on Sunday morning after the Mass. The chapel in which we taught was a reconverted movie theater.



We also helped with the distribution of food to the poor of the parish. They came from the many *coralones* [poor housing complexes consisting of adobe houses with thatched roofs, no plumbing] in the parish to receive a weekly supply of food that was given by Catholic Charities.



By January 1958 we had made our acquaintance with a young lady, Maria Natividad Ludeña, who was destined to later become our first Peruvian member.... How fortunate we were to have found such a wonderful young lady so soon!



Maria Natividad Ludeña Cordova ,  
Sr. Rosa Thomas,  
now Sr. Rosa Maria [photo at Golden Jubilee, 2014]



In April 1958 the Parochial School Nuestra Sra. de Guadalupe became our responsibility with Sister Doris teaching Kindergarten, —————>



← Sr. Mary Fulgence teaching one group of Transition (First Grade),

and Sister Agatha Marie teaching the other group of Transition. —————>



April 14, 1959. First and second graders singing the Peruvian National Anthem for the laying of the cornerstone of the "Salon de las Americas". This building will be our church until the permanent church will be built. It will then be used as the parish hall and gymnasium.

**1959 also brought another long awaited event. Three Sisters had been appointed to begin a mission in Cristo Rey Parish in La Paz, Bolivia.** These three Sisters would remain with us a few weeks before beginning their work. An even greater joy was that another Sister [Sr. Josepha Bauer] was to join our community in Lima. Since our community would be more than doubled in number for a few weeks it was necessary to rearrange our little house. The garage served as our dining room; the dining room became community room and parlor; the parlor became the chapel, and the chapel a bedroom.

**In the middle of August, Sr. Christine Foeller, Sr. John Bosco Sanders, Sr. Christopher Fiala and Sr. Josepha Bauer set sail from New York on the Santa Maria, the same boat on which the first group of Precious Blood Sisters had sailed to South America just two years before.** How their arrival was awaited by the Sisters in Lima!

September 3rd was the day that the Santa Maria was to arrive in Callao. After breakfast Father Garrity took us... to the port to await the arrival of the boat. ...



Note the remodeled habit.

*These were just some of the events that took place in those first years of planting the Precious Blood Vine in Latin America - to paraphrase the title of Sr. Doris' essay.*



Sr. Doris Rechiene —————>

← Sr. Josepha Bauer



- Sr. John Bosco died August 31, 1994
- Sr. Fulgence died July 11, 1996
- Sr. Christine died April 9, 2006
- Sr. Christopher died March 31, 2009
- Sr. Agatha Marie died November 13, 2009

