

July 18, 2016

Dear friends in Christ,

My wishes for peace and good in all times and places. I share with you that with faith in our Lord Jesus Christ I am recovering my physical health after my fall.

A troubling social situation persists in El Salvador due to the existence of gangs and the level of violence generated in areas controlled by them. Recently, the violence has reduced due to the implementation of the government's security program called Secure El Salvador, involving deployment of the national police in conjunction with the army, acting to prevent the taking hostages, and arresting those people who are accused and others found in the acts of violence themselves. I think this is working, but it will take some time, since evil is deeply rooted, and it is difficult to get resources for this work by the government. People are encouraged not to be overcome by fears and be brave to identify gang members to the officials.

We hope that you will continue to accompany us with your prayers, visits to us, support us through projects that nurture life among the people, most important of which is the support of the youth and families of our congregations in attaining comprehensive education and education for peace and life. Your prayers and support proclaim that God's people in El Salvador deserve to live in peace.

Yesterday I asked the people of Christ the Liberator in Nahualapa the question you asked about what Saint Paul Reformation can do to support them in remaining strong and secure. They said that you must have confidence in God who is always with them, that you pray with us that we will be safe and that God takes care of our lives. So I was very happy for these answers because you can feel the love of Jesus Christ with these words. We are people of faith who walk through faith in Jesus Christ.

As their pastor, I always bring them together with caution, and visit them for prayer during the day. This community of faith community responds with courage because we believe that what we do together is building up signs of the kingdom of God. We thank God that our community and congregation have been protected, especially our youth, who pursue their futures with hope thanks to your faithful support. We await you as always with arms wide open to embrace you.

I want to share that today I went with two youth, one from Peace of Christ Lutheran Church in Galilea, and one from Christ the Liberator, Nahualapa, to sign up for a systematic study of three months in automotive mechanics. These young people for various reasons have been unable to continue their formal studies. One of them is Ricardo Alvares, who is sponsored by Alice Swan. They told me their dreams to form a partnership and establish a mechanics shop, pooling their talents and capabilities and knowledge that they will share. They are also thinking to have their own vehicle to go out and do your work at people's homes. I felt very happy that we can play a part in their lives in pursuing better opportunities. Even if they have difficulties, the people go out to seek new opportunities with God in their lives.

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