

Dear Friends and Colleagues of the Mission Clinic Guadalupe in Southern Ecuador,

The “Clínica Misional Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe” recently celebrated the 11th anniversary of its founding. As an adjunct to the seasonal religious festivities of the parish we were blessed with a visit from the former Mother Superior, Hermana Consuelo Carvajal, who along with Padre Jorge Nigsch was instrumental in conceiving of this remarkable health care facility. At that time only children below six years of age, pregnant women, and those suffering from tuberculosis or leishmaniasis were eligible for care at the government run “Subcentro de Salud”. Private doctors often charged a week’s wage for a visit, and the pension to single unemployed mothers was barely above starvation level, making care inaccessible. Although vaccinations were performed, even the cost of medications in the hospital and outpatient drugs was passed on to the peasants who could ill afford them.

Into this environment we came in force, with local Ecuadorean support staff and the assistance of the Ecuadorean and Colombian Sisters. An American nurse, Amanda Anderson, the closest we will come to see as an angel on Earth, along with an international group of medical and dental volunteers, came to consider helping the impoverished peoples of the Ecuadorean Amazonia a calling. A German dental organization, FCSM – Förderkreis Clinica Santa Maria, stepped up, allowing dental services at a time when none at all was available through the government health care system. Surgical and medical subspecialists have come regularly to provide their unique skills so that procedures can be had at a fraction of the usual cost. Mainly serving the Yacuambi River valley, and adjoining regions of the Province Zamora Chinchipe and Loja Province, the outreach has extended to even the coastal regions of greater Guayaquil. We are of different faiths, or no faith at all, but we all share humanitarian mission. We have been overwhelmed by the hospitality that we have received as visitors from each of the ecclesiastic members of the community, and by the generosity of our donors.

Now forward to 2012. Access to the public health care system has improved and even some basic dental services are rendered by the government periodically. The hospital is less a place to be feared. Yet there has been a struggle to give adequate care, with understaffed and ill-supplied regional health centers and little access to non-emergent surgical procedures. The government has recognized this and has permitted a limited number of operations by our surgeon in the government hospital in Zamora. In the best of Socratic tradition we ask for what reason we should continue to support the “Clínica Misional Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe”. The people of the Ecuadorian Oriente have no misgivings. They line up 15 to 30 at a time for primary care and 50 strong for surgical specialists. Mobile missions rendering the most basic services have hundreds queue up. The Saraguro, Shuar and Mestizo communities we serve believe that we are important, so we should have no doubt.

A clinic intended for those underserved cannot be self-sufficient. We rely upon each of you to help us. Your donation to the “Friends of The Mission Clinic of Our Lady of Guadalupe”, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, is tax-deductible for US taxpayers. You may mail a check to the Treasurer of the Foundation, Mrs. Marie Glowski, 75 Town Beach Road, Old Saybrook CT 06475, USA. Or you may donate online per PayPal or a major credit card, through the link “Donate” on the Mission Clinic website, www.guadalupe-ec.org.

Sincerely,

Serle M. Epstein, M.D., F.A.C.P., Volunteer and Medical Advisor

Dear Friends of our Mission Clinic,

I want to express my gratitude in the name of all patients who you help to be served. I wish all of you the best for the holiday season and God’s blessing for the coming New Year.

Father Jorge Nigsch, Clinic Director