



Olancho Aid Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 15

Rockland MA, 02370

Education - Hope - Transformation

Dear Friends:

Usually I write on the First Sunday of Advent, but some critical factors have prompted me to write before the turkey ends up as Black Friday's *soup du jour*. December 14th will mark my 20 years in Honduras, and with Senior Priest Status from the Boston Archdioceses, I am here forever!

A lot has happened in the 20 years since I left Boston. Aided by an exceptional and committed team of Hondurans and international volunteers who inspire the "*hope and transformation*" that education brings, we have established some wonderful schools. I wear two hats, one as the Director of the Catholic University, which is entirely distinct from the other as President of the Olancho Aid Foundation. I am blessed to work with an incredible talented university staff that encourages, challenges and enables me to direct the Olancho Aid Foundation (OAF). In addition to Nazareth, a special needs school, we offer two high schools, a grade school and many educational and social service programs to the people of Olancho.

We receive help from many parish groups and also volunteers who work in our schools for a year or, in some cases, for a few months or weeks. This year we had 12 groups from several parishes in the States, and a medical group, which saw over 1,800 people. More high schools and colleges are slated to join us in 2012, along with parish outreach projects. God has blessed Olancho with more than 250 people who became part of the fabric of our lives during 2011.

Presently, we have over one hundred employees, and that translates into salaries we need to pay each month. We have generally operated in the red, or I prefer to say *pink*, because by your help and God's Graciousness we have been able to balance the budget. However, this year it is ***Fire Red***. Many Olanchanos are fond of saying "no es mi culpa"...that it *is not my fault*. Sometimes, yes, but most of the time, no. In this case, it is not our fault. The Honduran government did the right thing by mandating a salary increment for all citizens. They erred by a policy of immediate implementation. We and others had no warning and our budgets were in place. Some will ignore the change and pay salaries below the poverty line. We cannot! We are a church which preaches justice "*in season and out of season*." We have no choice! The law is a good law – the timing is terrible! The situation has ignited a short and long-term challenge for us.

Knowing that within days you will be blessed with aromas of turkey, counting the Advent candles and hanging stocking at Christmas, I am asking you to consider the following:

We are facing two stress-filled situations: First, we face a short-term end of the year deficit of nearly \$98,000 because of the new law. The Board has asked me to consider asking people for a five hundred dollar donation and preparing this letter continues to be a stressful process. I do it for Nazareth because no one else can! People's ability to help is a personal decision made after

prayerfully asking the Lord of the Cross for guidance. I am asking people to give what they can knowing the seriousness of the situation. We must raise \$ 98,000 by the 31st of December. We have received two donations, totaling \$10,000, and I preached last weekend at Holy Family in Rockland, MA, which I am hoping will spark interest.

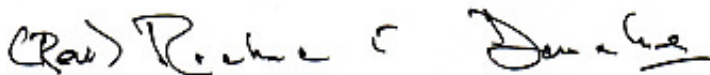
Secondly, and in some way it is just as important or perhaps, more so, are our long-term planning strategy to create better fundraising potential. Bottom line!: If we do not resolve the present problem and prepare well for the future then we might be forced to consider which program to eliminate. Nazareth, which serves the poorest and most vulnerable, is unfortunately, the first to consider. Due to the high-costs of operation and staffing, Nazareth would be the logical choice. That brings sorrow to my soul. It costs nearly \$10,000 a month to operate Nazareth, and personnel salaries are now mandated to be paid the equivalent of fourteen months as opposed to only twelve months a year. Saint Luke's parish in Texas sends us \$3,000 and school tuition brings in \$800, along with some local fundraising. Can I ask you to consider joining with the folks from Texas and sponsor a Nazareth child? You can find out more at: <http://sponsor.olanchoaid.org>

I have said many times that we have come this far by faith, and these projects are God's design and will survive because of Christ's Church. That is us. So, I am reaching out to all of you who are in a variety of ways both of the Church and the Olancho Aid Family and asking your help. A U.S. mailing address is included in this letter head to send direct mail donations. Online donations may also be made through **PayPal** at www.olanchoaid.org/donate

I know that many of you will be sitting down soon to Thanksgiving dinner, and can I suggest bringing our situation to those with whom you will be passing the cranberry sauce? All my life as a priest and pastor I have avoided asking people for money. It makes me more uncomfortable than imaginable. However, situations here, beyond our making, have forced us into this predicament.

Thank you so much for your attention, and please continue to support us with your prayers. I will add the names and telephone numbers of the OAF Board Members. They are interested in hearing from you and answering any questions you might have. I have included some photos of Nazareth students as well. Their faces show why we must continue to raise funds for their school. They remind me of why Christ the King chose a Stable in Bethlehem. I read recently, that when a funeral passes by that "**you will never see a U-Haul behind a hearse**". Please help us if you can.

Let us pray that the Lord who has started these projects in us with your help will bring them to completion. Blessings for the Holidays, and keep us in your prayers.



Rev. Richard T. Donahue, President,

Que Viva Cristo

richardonahue@hotmail.com
www.olanchoaid.org

OlanchoAid Foundation

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It is for them and their

60 classmates that the Nazareth School exist

Please help us give them an education and their families hope.

The Lord Hears the Cry of the PoorBlessed be the Lord