



Sto. Tomás

Iglesia Episcopal Santo Tomás Apóstol

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"LA RESURRECCION AND NEW WORLD SCHOOL" BARRIO COTO NORTE, MANATI, PUERTO RICO

This mission was the oldest of the rural missions, before the Rev. Manuel Ferrando's stations were united with the missionary district of Puerto Rico.

Started in a june apple packing shed in 1913 we moved on Christmas day 1914 into our concrete chapel, which was enlarged in 1924.

The mission in El Coto is the mother of the Barahona mission and may become a grandmother due to the splendid efforts of the Rev. E. Reus Garcia, who is at present the "Padre" of the congregation in that place.

Connected with "La Resurrección" was the New World school (Boarding school for poor boys). When in 1915 the Rev. Dr. Gray wrote his book "The New World", his study class on Latin America made possible the purchase of the property on which the New World School was started. The institution was built for \$600.- and could not house more than eight boys comfortably, so that extension was impossible.

When the boys finished the lower grades in the rural school we were obliged to send them to the urban school in Manatí. This was very unsatisfactory for many reasons and because so many of our church-school pupils were through school before they were ten years old, it was advisable to start the "New World Day School." Before the hurricane destroyed the boy's home, it was already decided that it should be closed because of the cut in the budget. Of the poor little fellows who left, some had to be returned to a life of misery. My heart ached to see one of our little boys in San Juan selling papers on the street. When he left here he was plump and well, now he is very thin and sickly looking,

the living picture of an Indian famine sufferer. All I could do was to give him some money to buy food.

Our farmer boys do not forget us. One of our oldest boys who works in San Juan is often our guest. Two who are in the Refuge for homeless boys in Santurce, want to come to see us during the holidays. One who is working in New York came to the boat to see us off when we returned from our furlough last September. He is making good in his position as a switchboard operator in a New York Hospital. He was one of the most mischievous lads we ever had and when we met we laughed heartily about his pranks. Once he made a snake from a discarded bicycle tire and placed it in front of the door of a peon who was awfully afraid of snakes.

Of the children who graduated from our New World Day School, several have gone to the U.S. because there is no work for them here. Some are married and some of the younger ones are going to school. We are all glad to hear that they did not have to be put back. One boy who had not finished eight grade when he left, is doing well in his first year high school in the Bernards School, Gladstone N.J. another pupil continued in the same grade in New York.

We have a Kindergarten, which we fear will have to be discontinued also, unless the new budget provides for its maintenance. Thirty little tots are enrolled. They not only get the usual kindergarten instruction, but they get a lunch every morning at recess, which is provided by a friend who spent a few days here in the mission and saw the need of feeding their bodies as well as their minds.

The Church is growing steadily, although figures may be misleading, due to the fact that since the hurricane there has been a regular Exodus to the U.S.

Sometimes we ask members why they did not come to church. We hear as reasons: either sickness, no shoes, no clothes or no penny to put in the collection plate.

Margarita is the oldest daughter of one of our members. Her father was working on the mission property and taught the boys practical agriculture. After the allowance was with drawn and he lost hereby his job, the family is in dire distress. A few days ago Margarita came to see if I had a pair of shoes for her. I asked why she had not come to church. She said that she was ashamed to let the plate pass without putting in her penny and she had none. She said that when her hen was laying, she always had a penny for church because then she sold an egg, but the hen does not lay at this time. An effort of self-support of you please, but it will take a millenium to reach that much desired goal, if we have to depend upon the Porto Rican hens.

Two members of our church have recently graduated from St. Luke's Hospital in Ponce, where they went for their training three years ago after graduating from the New World School. Another churchmember graduated a year ago. How well could we use one of them as a visiting nurse. There is so much sickness. Those who are able to walk come to our house for treatment an I tend to them if possible, or send them to Manatí to one of our Manatí doctors who had always been very friendly and willing to help, but only through a visiting nurse bedridden patients and those too ill to come can be reached.

This morning Margarita's mother was carried to the hospital in Manatí in what we call: The mission's ambulance, a large hammock, which we formely used on our porch, but which at present is used for emergency cases only, when the patients cannot be transported in our automobile. The poor woman had to be operated at once on account of the lack of the proper care in her abnormal maternity case. A trained nurse would at one have realized the danger to mother and child an would have called for a doctor, but the ignorant woman who acts as midwife out here, thought she did not need a doctor and caused the baby's death and a great deal unnecessary suffering to the mother, who is still in great danger.

The mission property compresses about thirty five acres. After the closing of the boy's home we did not need the cattle any longer, neither the land for pasture. There were no funds to pay for their care, neither for keeping the farm in cultivation, and the property in good condition.

We disposed of the animals by sending them to other mission stations. In one of them they named the cattle for the staff in Manatí namely: Don Juan, Doña María and Ethel, and at another mission they named our old mare: Manatí.

The land we divided among the farmer laborers, now unemployed, to plant on shares.

Fruit growing for export is out of the question for the mission, as it is only profitable for those who have a great deal of money and who also can afford great losses when prices are poor. The "on shares" plan seems to be a complete failure from a financial standpoint because the poor peons have neither money nor credit. They have to be helped from the time of planting until they have disposed of their crops. Usually they are obliged to borrow so heavily on their crops that they are not or hardly able to repay what they have borrowed. Their methods are primitive and costly, because they have no modern appliances. Every inch planted has to be hand cultivated. If one considers missionwork not to be carried on for its returns in dollars and cents, but as a means to spiritual, moral and social uplift, then the mission properly is giving good returns for the following reasons:

1. The poor people by planting food crops are kept from starvation
2. Instead of sitting idle at home, brooding over their misfortune they are kept busy and as contented as possible under the circumstances.
3. They realize that the mission tries to help them solve their problems economical as well as spiritual.
4. The mission property instead of becoming a jungle is kept looking decent at a minimum of expense to the mission.

Although much more could be said, this may suffice to give an idea of what the church is doing in this part of the island. To many it may seem very unimportant and to those who judge the value of a work only by its cash returns, very unprofitable also. But we do not consider our work in that light and we thank the Lord for the opportunities for service granted to the staff of "La Resurrección".