

Pastor inspires flocks to make a difference in Peru

Located high atop the Andes Mountains at an elevation of 14,000 feet, a small feeding center in Pampallacta, Peru, attracts 350 children every day - some of whom walk as many as three hours to get their daily meal.

Despite the high volume, the center's kitchen isn't much more than a cramped 9-by-12 room where meals are cooked over a wood-burning pit. Children sit outside on rocks or on the ground to eat their meals.

Father John Lombardi, priest administrator of St. Peter in Hancock and St. Patrick in Little Orleans, wants to change all that. He and a group of area Catholics are raising money to help build a dining hall and new kitchen benefitting the children of Pampallacta.

St. Peter the Apostle in Libertytown will host a fundraiser Oct. 29 from 6-9 p.m. to raise money for the venture. Participants will have the chance to purchase Peruvian arts, crafts, calendars and other items. A similar fundraiser will be held Nov. 12 at St. Peter in Hancock from 6-9 p.m.

"Seeing the children at the feeding center makes you realize the extreme poverty of the people, but also the beauty of them," said Father Lombardi, who led an August mission trip to Pampallacta and other regions in Peru.

While in the South American country, Father Lombardi and his group worked with Blessed Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Lima and Cusco - ministering to the sick and dying at area hospices. They also volunteered at several orphanages through the Peruvian Heart Organization and explored the Amazon rainforest.

"When we visited the orphanages, the children greeted us with great joy - like we were rock stars," Father Lombardi said. "They were very energetic and happy to see us."

Fifteen people participated in the mission trip. They represented St. Peter, Hancock;

St. Peter, Libertytown; St. Agnes, Catonsville; Holy Family, Middletown and the Catholic Community at Fort Detrick in Frederick.

Father Lombardi hopes to raise a total of \$10,000 for the new kitchen and dining hall.

Call 443-413-8329 for more information.