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Pray with Paraguay on Sunday, July 1, 2018

BY [AMELIA CASILLAS](#) ON JUNE 28, 2018

Lectionary Selection: Mark 5:21-43

Prayers for Paraguay:

We give thanks to God for those who collaborate to make it possible for us to accompany the Paraguayan people in complex times and for His Word that traces the way forward. Let us continue to pray that God will continue to provide the necessary resources so that this touch of the invisible woman of the biblical story continues to stop the Paraguayan people's illnesses, such as misunderstanding, devaluation and social injustice. Let them face the daily life of pain and scarcity with much hope, believing the God of life, who will be with them. Pray that we can continue to be supportive - supporting them, accompanying them and giving them the tools that will allow them to heal. Let us make the words of Jesus our own when he told his disciples, so that we could do as He had done (John 13:15). Let us follow the modeling of Jesus, blessing and making presence in this blessed land. May God help us. Amen.



Mission Stewardship Moment from Paraguay:

The Gospel of Mark presents us with an ill woman and the compassionate Christ who acts on behalf of His people. It is Jesus who goes through communities healing, teaching, and empowering people with the sole purpose of blessing, sustaining, and validating the ignored, humiliated, or simply invisible among the communities. The evangelist presents Jesus as the alternative of Hope for the hopeless, disadvantaged, sick and oppressed.



This desperately ill woman, with an anguished father, allows us to identify with the daily life of many of our Paraguayan communities who suffer powerlessness before inhuman and unjust leaders. We join the pain of peasants and indigenous people who are being deprived of their lands, the anguish of malnutrition of children and the elderly, together with insensitivity and lack of



resources for indigenous communities, working children, and the unjust social inequality that causes so much damage to the Paraguayan people. The model of Jesus has to continue to reach the communities that need to discover the Jesus that integrates and does not reject.

Somehow that Woman of the Biblical story - marginalized, stigmatized, accused of being impure, rejected and lonely - discovered Jesus. This good news has also reached the Disciples of Christ Churches of Paraguay, Global Ministries' partner in Paraguay, and together with other institutions has reached the communities of the Paraguayan Chaco, Tuyu Puku, Caacupé, Luque, Asunción, and many other places. They have taken the hope of a new dawn for women and their families who face domestic violence, abuse, marginalization, and social invisibility. We have to continue supporting them, accompanying them, and motivating them until they discover in themselves the abilities to organize and discover that they can rise up and make new possibilities realities.



(Prayer and Mission Moment by Rev. Amelia Casillas)

Rev. Amelia Casillas, member of Iglesia Discipulos de Condado Moderno, Caguas, Puerto Rico, serves with the Round Table for Mission Development of the Disciples of Christ Church in Argentina and the Disciples of Christ Church in Paraguay.

More information on Paraguay:

<https://www.globalministries.org/paraguay>



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Paraguay

Paraguay is located in Central South America, northeast of Argentina.

After decades of military dictatorship, Paraguayans struggle to affirm their democratic government while threats of a military coup haunt them. The Disciples of Christ Church has been ministering in Paraguay for more than 70 years, not only through spiritual leadership, but also through social service institutions. Many national leaders were educated at the International School, and Friendship Mission has offered health clinics and other related services for many years. Jack Norment Camp has the only ecology program of its kind, and has been used by the government to model other programs.

Pray for: The Nurses' Aid program of Friendship Mission, which trains nurses to serve the rural areas of the country. The camp leaders' training program of the Jack Norment Camp of the Disciples of Christ in Paraguay which helps develop leadership, not only for the churches in Paraguay, but for the churches in Chile and Puerto Rico as well.

Population (2014 est) – 6,703,860

Area – 252,800 mi

Capital – Asuncion

Ethnic Background

Mestizo (Spanish and Amerindian) – 95%

Other – 5%

Exports – soybeans, feed, cotton, meat, edible oils, wood, leather

Imports – road vehicles, consumer goods, tobacco, petroleum products, electrical machinery, tractors, chemicals, vehicle parts

Life Expectancy (2014 est) – M 74 years, F 80 years

Infant Mortality (2014 est) – 20.75 deaths/1,000 live births

Adult Illiteracy Rate – 6.1%