

## **Some information about the Ecuador trip.**

**November 18-25, 2023**

### **Passport**

Participants must have a U.S. Passport.

The expiration date must be at least six months after your departure from Ecuador. (For this group that means that the passport expiration date must be after May 25, 2024).

If you do not have a passport or yours is about to expire, begin the process of getting a passport. Expedite the application as it may take 10 weeks to receive a passport otherwise.

### **Health Insurance**

Each person entering Ecuador must bring a printed letter from their health insurance company stating that they are covered for accident or illness in a foreign country.

### **Cost**

The cost of the trip this year will be \$XXXX. This includes airfare and the Rostro de Cristo program fee. This also includes some extra to cover the cost of chaperones. This amount will be billed to the students' JP2 account.

### **Fundraising**

Many students who have participated in the past were able to lower the cost of the trip through fundraising. When the group is complete fundraising letters will be issued to each student. They may send these letters to businesses, family, friends and their parish and ask for support.

Money raised through this effort will go to each individual.

### **Additional Expenses**

Students will have few opportunities to shop or spend money while in Ecuador. They will have one opportunity to buy crafts or gifts in the city. Students may want some spending money while they are in the airports.

### **Accommodations**

While in Ecuador, students will stay in a retreat house run by Rostro de Cristo. The houses offer simple accommodations. The houses are clean and well maintained. There is a guard on duty at all times when a group is in residence. Transportation is provided by Rostro de Cristo in 14 passenger vans.

### **Health**

No shots or special medications are required for entrance into Ecuador. Each student should check with his/ her own physician to see what he/she recommends. We expect that each participant has received the most recent COVID vaccine and this year's flu shot.

In case of emergency, *Rostro de Cristo* is located near well equipped well-staffed modern hospitals

While in Ecuador, students must not eat or drink food and water outside of the *Rostro de Cristo* house unless the chaperones or volunteer leaders indicate that it is alright to do so. Running water is becoming more common in the poor neighborhoods we visit, but the water is not purified and not safe for drinking. It is fine for washing and bathing, but not for drinking or cooking. There will be plenty of bottled water in the retreat house. That should be the only water you drink, and all food is prepared with purified water.

A similar rule applies to food. People may offer you food, and it may look delicious, but you have no way of knowing the conditions in which the food was prepared. So just say no, thank you (no, gracias)!

### **Safety**

Safety is always a concern when one travels, especially in a foreign country. The students will be supervised carefully by the chaperones during the trip. In addition, *Rostro de Cristo* takes great pains to ensure that its participants are safe during their time in Quito. An Ecuadorian employee and a North American volunteer always accompany the group, and there are guards at the retreat compound around the clock.

**Expectations**

All of the rules and regulations that apply at school apply while students are involved in this trip. They will be expected to participate fully in each day's activities and evening prayer and reflection. They will be expected to dress modestly and appropriately for each day's activities, and to comply with the directives of the adult leaders. There will be a lights out time assigned each night and it is expected that the students will use the time to rest adequately in order to be ready for the next day's planned activities. They will be expected to treat all fellow travelers and everyone they meet with respect. All of the students in this retreat group must participate fully in preparation. There will be a series of preparatory sessions (morning meetings beginning in October) and attendance is required. We will work within the schedule of the students involved.

**Activities**

People often ask "what will we do in Ecuador?" At *Rostro de Cristo* the emphasis is on being with the people of the neighborhood, rather than doing things. It is a difficult concept for always busy, always scheduled North Americans to understand. The current Rostro de Cristo volunteers have ministries in schools, after school programs and elder programs. There is no set agenda at this time.

**Life at Rostro de Cristo**

While living in Quito we will live a simple lifestyle, which is consistent with the lifestyle of our neighbors. There will be plenty of food and no one will be hungry, but the meals that we prepare will be typical of the meals eaten by the people in Quito. community. Rice, beans, salad, fruit, bread and fruit juice are common. An Ecuadorian employee or a volunteer will help students with the preparation of typical meals.

**Life in the Neighborhood.**

People in Ecuador are generally warm and welcoming. They will be happy to see you and will invite you into their homes. They live simply. Many people do not have steady work. Those that do, work in agriculture, manufacturing and as domestics for minimum wage (about \$250.00 per month). Many families have shops as part of their homes selling items to help make ends meet.

**Emergency Contact**

Generally, there is no communication from the group while they are in Ecuador. Cell phones and other electronic devices are held by chaperones once the group arrives at Rostro de Cristo. You will not hear from your son or daughter during the week. Each student will be directed to text parents to let them know of our safe arrival in Guayaquil. There will be a phone chain established before the group leaves in case of changes in our plans or itinerary. As we get closer to the departure date you will receive a phone number you can use to contact Miss McPherson or Mr. Lynch during the trip, but only in the case of dire emergency.

**Group Size**

The group is limited to twelve students. If more than twelve students wish to be a part of the group, rising seniors will be accepted first. A lottery will place rising juniors in the remaining spots.

Saint John Paul II School  
Ecuador Travelers  
Interest Form

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Student's email address \_\_\_\_\_

Students cell phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Please note the following:

The dates of this Ecuador trip are November 18-25, 2023

The estimated cost is \$1500-\$1800

Families assume the cost of the trip. Students who participate in fundraising efforts can defray their expenses. Families will be billed through the school's FACTs account.

Students who participate in this trip agree to abide by all school rules and the directives of the chaperones and the Rostro de Cristo program during this time.

We indicate our interest in our student participating in this program by completing this form and attaching a deposit of \$100. Check made out to Saint John Paul II School. Ecuador Travelers on memo line.

Parent signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please print name here \_\_\_\_\_

Parent email address \_\_\_\_\_

Parent cell phone number \_\_\_\_\_