ADVENT REFLECTION
from Paz y Esperanza, Chile

This month we are sharing a reflection from Silvana Frontier who heads up the team at Paz y Esperanza Chile. She writes about the recent serious civil protests in Chile and subsequent state of emergency declared by the President and invites us to reflect on how Jesus came into the world to bring us peace and hope.

"On 18th October our lives changed. We will always remember where we were, what we were doing and who we were with. The news seemed untrue. Could it really be happening in Chile? It was hard to understand the magnitude of the facts. A social change had started in Chile and its costs are not yet clear.

Forty days after the start of the chaos, we are still seeing fires blocking roads, attacks on police stations and confrontations between civilians and the police, looting and people vandalising public and private property.

My husband and I are missionaries in a small town and one night we were called to an urgent situation. We got up and on our way we saw a confrontation. We got to the corner and slowed down so we could pray in the name of the Lord. On one side there were 100 people shouting, armed with sticks and throwing stones. On the other side were 30 police officers with bulletproof vests, helmets and rifles. We drove through the battlefield, as we had no option. Suddenly the noise stopped and everyone looked at us in surprise. We were living out Psalm 91 v7: 'A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.' I remembered that Jesus is the prince of peace and he calls us to be peacemakers. Matthew 5 v 9 says blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. When we take part in the mission of God, our job is to be a peacemaker and to rest in his care. He is the one who protects us.

Who are those most affected by the current situation in our country? The poor. Public transport has been affected so they have no way to get to work or school.
They don't have access to education or healthcare because public service workers are on strike. They don't have access to food and hygiene products as supermarkets have been burnt down. This situation has created more poor people, including people who have had their businesses burnt down or looted and have no other source of income. Many will find it hard to start again from scratch. We want to help these people who are devastated. We want to share that through Jesus we can have peace and hope because we are no longer in our hands but in the hands of God (Matthew 11 v 28), because we no longer depend on our belongings as we belong to God (2 Corinthians 1 v 21-22), because we no longer look for security in money as our security is in Christ (Matthew 6 v 33).

Jesus invites us to be peace builders, to build peace in society and our own personal peace. How should we respond to his call?

This Advent, we would love you to consider giving to the work of PyE in Chile. We would also love you to consider becoming regular givers in 2020. Follow this link to our Just Giving Page to set up a regular or one-off gift. Thank you very much.

https://www.justgiving.com/pazyesperanza

The leadership of Paz y Esperanza, Chile. Claudia, Silvana y Edit
If you want to see a short YouTube clip of the violence in the Chilean capital, Santiago, click on this: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlQadUY247I.