

Christmas Message

Dear Center friends,
Jesus is near! The Advent season is when we prepare our hearts for the arrival of the Child Jesus at Christmas. It is a celebration that always calls us to think about family, about community and about solidarity with others who have less. Christmas allows our best feelings to come out. Let's get ready for it!

Preparing for Christmas is taking a journey into our lives. Advent invites us to review the path traveled during the year 2022. Look at the faces we have met, examine the actions we have taken, and consider how faithful we have been in following Jesus. His Gospel encourages us to love our neighbor, to be concerned about building a just and peaceful world. That is our task as human beings and our vocation is to strive for it.

At the Center we also celebrate Christmas with great enthusiasm. Our children, teenagers and their parents are preparing their hearts to reach the day we remember the birth of Jesus. Our more than 300 students learn more about God coming to a humble manger in Nazareth and how we are all invited to be as simple as the Holy Family was. We all prepare ourselves with promises to be better people, more studious, more caring and more supportive.

We wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our dear benefactors who make the Center's daily work possible. Many blessings to you and your families during the year 2023. Sending you all a warm hug from the middle of the world!

Fraternally in Christ,

Fr. Gustavo Calderón Schmidt, SJ
Jesuit Provincial of Ecuador
President, The Center - A Family of Families

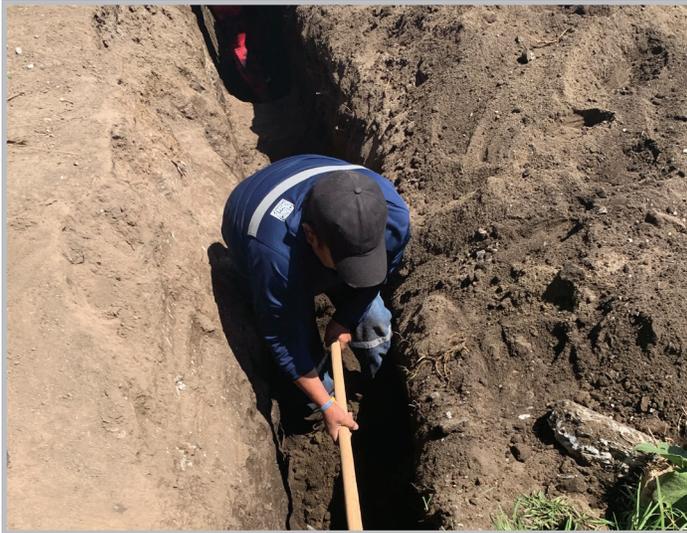


A Bathroom for the Acosta Infante Family!

Maria, a single mother of five, now has a bathroom in her home much thanks to the work of volunteers, Center families, staff, and visitors.

At the Center, we participate in Mingas (building projects at member homes that include indoor plumbing, roof work, kitchens, structural repairs, and more).

Staff, members, visitors, and volunteers all pitch in to improve the living conditions for our families, and Maria, our newest Minga recipient now has a bathroom for her and her children.



There is still time!

You can help break the cycle of poverty this year! Use your phone's camera and scan this QR code to give now.



"I'm thankful for the Center because it's provided me with a second home and a second family!"

- Ana Palomo
17 years old



"This year, as we celebrate 58 years since our founding, I can't help but reflect on the thousands of lives that we have been able to impact, with your help. We have been able to send over 25 million dollars since 1964, and with that provided more than just education, training, medical care, faith, and family support, but hope. Hope for our families, hope for the future, and hope to end poverty for so many. Thank you for making the past 58 years amazing, and to making the next 58, even better."

~Jim Parks, C4WF Board President

We're Thankful for...



Our 389 families!



Our 20+ local partnerships!



Daily breakfast for our youngest members!



Fordham Prep's visit in June!



Our 24 graduates!



Three US parish fundraisers!



Our 90 teammates!



In everything give thanks!

Grateful for our C4WF board

Almost a year ago, one of our most dedicated and longtime volunteers and supporters, Steve Callahan retired from our C4WF board. Steve's service to our mission is an inspiration, and his shoes are far too big to fill. Fortunately, we have been blessed with two new board members, Shauna Burbary and Patrick Barrett. Patrick is a former year long volunteer, and Shauna is new to the organization. They both bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, energy, and passion. We welcome our new board members, and are forever grateful to our retired members, like Steve.

The C4WF board works behind the scenes here stateside to support the Center's mission in Quito. The board cares deeply about the families and staff so much that they give of their time and resources to continue the many programs being carried out by the committed staff at the Center. Fundraising, especially during especially such challenging times can be difficult, to say the least, but our board is up for the task. It truly takes the dedication of the board, staff, and supporters like you to make it all happen.

If you would like to help support our efforts here stateside, please reach out to Serena at Development@C4WF.org for more information.



Please mail contributions to:

Center for Working Families (C4WF)

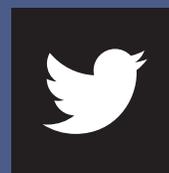
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Serena Steele, Development Director

Phone: 269-615-7291
Email: development@c4wf.org

Jim Parks, C4WF Board President

Email: boardpres@c4wf.org



Dear Center Supporters,
In January, I leave my responsibility as Ecuadorian Jesuit Provincial and therefore also as the President of *The Center - A Family of Families*. I found out about the Center in 1986 when I entered the San Ignacio Novitiate in Cotacollao, located right across the street from the Center's campus. From that time, I learned about the Center's mission to serve and empower the most vulnerable families. Since 1964, young children, adolescents and their families have been the life force of its mission; families with great challenges, but also with beautiful smiles of hope.

I have many memories of the Center in these last six years; accompanying people, in long days of meetings thinking and rethinking the Center in order to continue walking alongside those who need support the most, and being faithful to our original charism. The care and love for one another has been a main focus that has motivated our dedication every day. I deeply admire the dedication of our teachers, the enthusiasm and creativity with which they reach out to their students. It's really something that inspires. Also the efforts that have been made in the Center's Production Division - carpentry, sewing and metal mechanics - to sustain themselves over time and reinvent themselves to offer their support for the maintenance of the Center.

The hard times of the pandemic were probably the ones that united us the most, especially those of us who were at the Center every day when things were very difficult with the COVID-19 infections. We received donations of food, first aid or other things that were needed at that time. We were a single team, a single family that worked together to find comfort and encouragement to continue offering not only food, but the solidarity of those who care for each other to carry out small transformations that provide justice and peace for homes not only of our families, but also from many others in Quito and its surrounding neighborhoods. We prayed together, celebrated Eucharist, and shared the body and blood of the Lord. This gave us a lot of strength during the time of the pandemic, which marked my life with the Center in a very special way.

I leave with a grateful heart. There are many faces in the United States and in Ecuador that have shared in wonderful time, forging wonderful memories. A very special place in my heart is held by Pat Parks, who loved the Center so much and did extraordinary things in a simple and humble way so that our mission would continue and be sustained over time. His permanent dedication to the families of the Center always gave light to our commitment. I met her in 1995 during my theology studies in the US (1995-98). On several occasions, I was invited to visit her home in Milwaukee. I always felt her as an enthusiastic friend that served the Lord with her sincere contribution to the work of the Center. The Parks family and especially her son, Jim, continue her legacy of service. Together, we strive for the Center to strengthen its mission in Ecuador. Pat's departure made us very sad, but we continue to feel her very close, praying for all of us.

I would like to thank all the benefactors who make our daily work possible. We are deeply grateful. Without you, it would not be possible to touch the lives of the families with whom we work. I encourage you to continue this commitment. We as the Society of Jesus and C4WF are firmly committed to the mission of *The Center - A Family of Families*. Thanks to the volunteers who cheerfully and determinedly give of themselves every day. Thanks to all the staff that make up a large part of our "Family of Families." They are good, generous and caring people.

Although I will no longer be the Ecuadorian Jesuit Provincial, I will continue to feel that I am an active member of the Center's community. May God bless our walk in the service of togetherness. Together, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of our "Family of Families!"

With gratitude and many blessings,

Fr. Gustavo Calderón Schmidt, SJ
Jesuit Provincial of Ecuador
President, The Center - A Family of Families

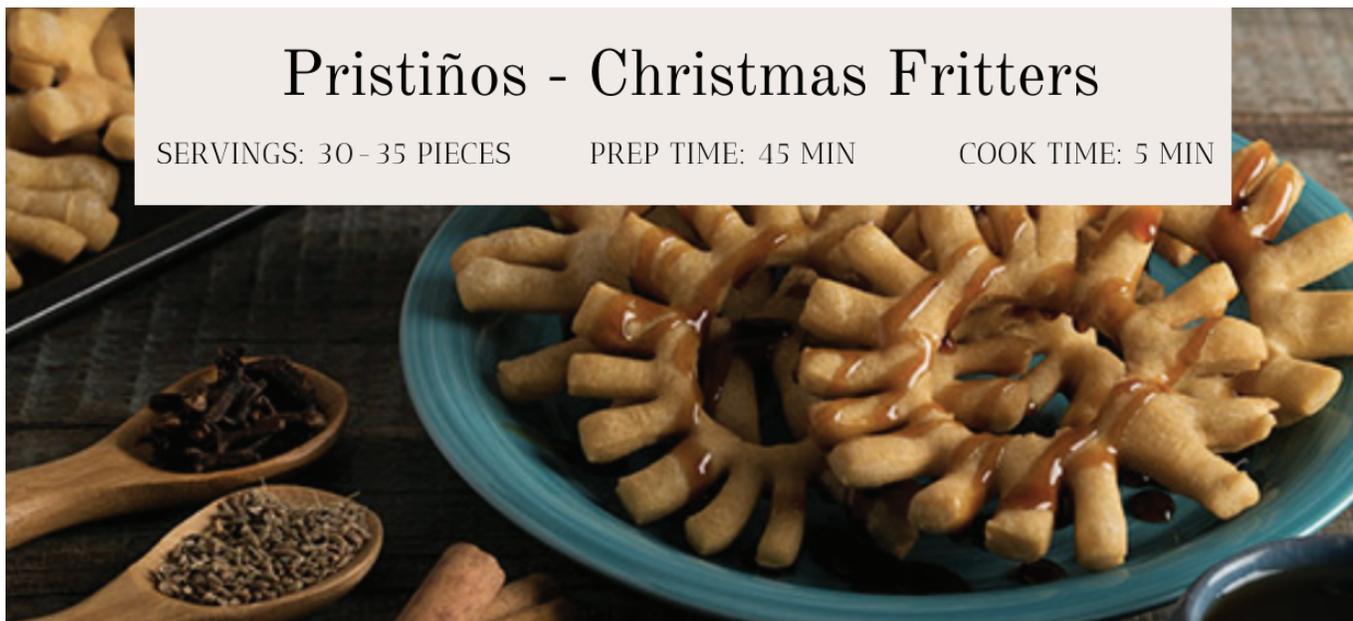


Pristiños - Christmas Fritters

SERVINGS: 30 - 35 PIECES

PREP TIME: 45 MIN

COOK TIME: 5 MIN



Pristiños are traditional Christmas fried pastries that are served with panela syrup or candied figs.

Ingredients

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| Spiced water: | Pristiño dough: | |
| • 1 cup water | • 3 cups flour | • 1 tbsp. lemon juice |
| • 2-3 cinnamon stick | • 1 tbsp. sugar | • ¼ cup aguardiente |
| • 2 whole cloves | • 1 tsp. baking powder | • ½ cup lukewarm spiced water + |
| • 1 tsp. anise seeds | • ¼ tsp. salt | additional as needed |
| | • 6 tbsp. butter ¾ stick or 3 oz | • 2 cups of oil for frying |
| | • 2 egg yolks | |

Directions

1. Spiced water: combine 1 cup of water, cinnamon sticks, cloves and anise seeds in a small saucepan and bring to boil. Let that simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and strain out the spices. *It should be lukewarm when added to the dough.
2. Combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in the food processor and pulse until mixed.
3. Add the butter, cut in small pieces, and mix well.
4. Add the yolks, lemon juice, aguardiente and ½ cup of the spiced water. Mix until the dough starts to form into small clumps, add additional spiced water, one tablespoon at a time, if needed.
5. Remove the dough from the food processor, work it gently and form a ball. Let the dough rest at room temperature for about an hour.
6. Take half of the dough and roll it out on a floured surface until you have a thin layer of dough.
7. Use a knife to cut the dough into 1 inch wide and 6-10 inch long strips. Make small cuts that are about 1/3 to ½ deep into the side of each strip, then form the strip into a circle to make a crown-like shape. Press the edges together to seal the crown, use water or egg white to help glue the edges together if needed.
8. Heat the oil in a medium sized frying pan, test by dipping the dough into the oil and if it sizzles, it's ready. Carefully add the fritters to the pan. Do not overcrowd! Fry 2-3 at a time depending on the size of the pan. Turn them over when golden. Remove pristiños from pan and place on plate with paper towels to drain any excess oil.
9. Serve warm with miel de panela o piloncillo spiced syrup. Can also be served with dulce de higos or figs cooked in panela syrup. Honey can be used as a replacement or alternative for panela syrup. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon if desired.