

Caracas, 20th November

Dear Daddy and all at home,

Well we finally arrived in Venezuela last night at 11 o'clock. That is about 3 am in the morning Irish time.

The trip went very well. There were about 70 people in the plane and the kids travelled very well to New York. In Shannon of course they were looking for us when we finally got through customs. Carlos kicked up a big ruckus with the car and the train. He would have only been too delighted to spend the whole day playing with those things. I think he realised that we were travelling as he began to say to us "Granda .. Tom gone?" Then they got hold of one of the ear-phones they use to listen to music so that kept both of them amused to New York. The Flight was a little over eight hours and we fly right up over Scotland, Iceland, Greenland, and then down by Boston to New York. We had a meal at dinner time immediately after leaving Shannon and then another before arriving so we were well looked after. They were also two pictures. I slept during one but the other was about the Mafia called 'The Untouchables'. It showed Al Capone and all his cronies. Carlos was more interested in exploring the toilets as you can imagine and playing with the water taps. In New York we got through Customs very quickly. They didn't ask us to open one box. An official, real heavy built red-cheeked American came over to us and asked where I was from. I said Ireland and he told me his wife was from Wexford so he gave us the all clear. We then left the luggage in another counter where it was dispatched to Caracas.

Fortunately there was no delay as the plane for Caracas left New York within the two hours since our arrival. We searched out the place it was leaving from., Bought some chips and a hamburger and Fatima had a look at the shops. She told me

flight leaves about 12 o'clock and we arrive in Argentina at about six pm. so it is very quick. We will have sent 17 packages by post by the time we leave so now we will have to face the unpacking. Certainly we hope not to be moving now for a while. I don't envy those people who have to change places very often because of their work.

On Saturday we discovered a very nice Zoo near here and Carlos had a great time. There was an open yard where there were sheep, goats and some sheltland ponies. The kids could go in and walk around with the animals. They had a great time with them. I'm finishing this letter today the 10th of December. Carlos has recovered from his stomach upset and we are into our last few days in Venezuela. Fortunately we have everything packed so don't have to be rushing at the last minute.

By the time this letter arrives you will be well into the Christmas spirit. Here they have lights up all over the place. At last there seems to be some good news around with Reagan and Gorbachev signing the arms treaty. It may mean a more peaceful world.

There was an article here in an American magazine talking about the new Irish Emigration. It was a bit exaggerated as it said some came back and over every few months. In fact it gave the impression that this was the normal situation for the Irish who recently arrived to work in the States.

By now I am just about fed up with the traffic jams in Caracas. As I had hardly ever driven here I hadn't realised they were as bad as they are. In fact Cork would be no problem for the people here. But then drivers are usually fairly co-operative. They leave you go out into the traffic and they don't try and run you down. They know that if everybody tried pushing their way around the traffic would never get moving.

It is amazing. The car I have is a big american one - a Chevrolet - automatic. For 2 pounds you can fill her with petrol! Yesterday I got her greased, change of oil, filter and washed as I will be giving her back again now - all for about 6 pounds. So you can see cars are really inexpensive to run.

I'll write again soon from Argentina it will be. I will then send a shorter address.

All the best - God Bless fond regards

*Bob & Patricia Park* *Ann Rose*



Caracas, 7th December

Archivo  
Nacional de  
la Memoria

Dear Daddy and all at home:

Well here we are getting into our last week in Caracas. We have really been given a luxury two-weeks as a friend loaned us a car to get around so we have mostly been packing and getting papers the last few days.

The weather here is very warm and it is raining quite a lot but nonetheless it is enjoyable enough. Here in the Maryknoll house we have a room and there is a kitchen with all the amenities. The kids are doing well although Carlos is still missing the space and the freedom. The change of food took its toll as well as he got a touch of diarrhea with some milk. We were using milk out of cartons so now we've gone back to the powder milk. Amy Rosa is now walking quite confidently so she is getting into everybody's way. We will certainly be glad to get to Argentina to finally settle into a house. All this traveling really is no joke at all. Fatima as well is dying to get back.

In fact, they've been certain tragedies near here the last few days so to speak. A friend of ours who is a missionary nun in the Amazon area has got very sick with malaria so much that some two days ago they told us she may well not survive at all. Apparently the fever had got to her brain and she was in a coma. However yesterday there was more optimistic news. She was reacting very positively to the treatment.

About a week ago I got other news from one of the Brothers of Charles de Foucauld that Ivan, whom I think John will remember, as he used to live in the Fraternity in London with Terry. He worked as a postman. Well they had diagnosed leukemia and given him treatment which he seemed to have cured him. However he had a relapse and died. I had known it but it took place some two years ago. It really is a killer - this cancer question. He didn't smoke nor drink and had a very orderly life if you wish. So you never know.

Last Sunday there was a go-away party held for us. It was very nice and a very fine folk-group came to sing for us. So we had a big send off. This Friday, another group are organising a going-away Mass for us in the area I used to work before and on Monday the 14th December we will be flying out. The flight