

Portal de Belén Foundation

10 Tiger Lily Lane

Ithaca, NY 14850

Saludos a todos, staff and parishioners of St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

Wonderful news – El Portal de Belén Daycare and Grammar School have been spun off completely from the Foundation! **Our first graduate!** We are grateful and ecstatic that the earliest goals of the foundation are being realized –the creation of financially stable support networks, which allow us to move our support to the community of the poorest of the poor.

St. Catherine's has taken over complete supplementary support of this important corporal work of mercy. **What Has Happened and What Does this Mean?** A little history of the Foundation:

January 1999 - A Sister parish relationship developed officially between St. Catherine and San Antonio de Padua, Monte Plata, DR. Portal Daycare Center became a particular focus in the relationship.

January 2000 – The first \$1000 was sent to El Portal on a continuing monthly basis

2001 – The Foundation El Portal de Belén was founded by Fr. Ron Gaesser, Greg Galvin and Sally True to ensure the future of said daycare center and facilitate ongoing additional financial support.

What Has Now Happened? The Dominican Ministry of Education, under the current President, Danilo Medina, has substantially increased state funding of the Dominican school system, Catholic schools included. The government is now substantially financing school lunches, buildings and most of school employees' salaries. With El Portal de Belén Project Daycare and school now integrated in the public school system, its future is secured. St. Catherine supplements what the state does not cover.

The support of our Foundation for this project is no longer necessary, freeing it for funding of other projects. The newest is **Project Rachel**, a school for autistic, Down syndrome and mentally challenged children. We hope that this school will also enter the state system someday. As of now 85% of its total costs are paid for by the Foundation.

After July 1, 2018 all donations to support of El Portal de Belén Daycare and Grammar school need to be sent directly to St. Catherine of Siena parish.

Ongoing (tax-deductible) support of the Foundation's other projects can be directed to:

El Portal de Belén Foundation

c/o Janice Regan

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Ithaca, NY 14850

Muchísimas gracias and bendiciones a todos y a todas (many thanks and blessings to all),



Padre Ron Gaesser