

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be here today and to be able to tell you a little about my home, Puerto Rico and the work the Episcopal Church is doing there. I am going to tell you a little story and you will forgive me if almost the first person I mention in the story is my father.

About thirty years ago a young man, Antonio Villafañe walked into St. Luke's Church in San Juan, Puerto Rico and asked for a friend of his. The friend was attending a meeting of a young people's society and he presented Antonio to the Rector The Rev. Harvey Walter. He invited Antonio to come again to the young peoples group with his friend. Now Antonio was a Roman Catholic but he was very much attracted by this work among the young people, he had not seen much work like that being done in his own Church. So he did go again with his friend and little by little he heard more and more about the Episcopal Church. He thought it wonderful to be able to hear the Services of the Church in his own language, that the priest could marry and have a family of his own and thereby be better fitted to understand the problems of other families. He saw little children baptized whether there was money to pay for the baptism or not, in his Church you had to have the dollar. He loved the hymns he heard them sing too. So, in time of ~~his~~ own free will he decided to make the change and become an Episcopalian. A little while after he was received in the Church, Rev. Walter who had been observing his facility to make friends, to express himself in public and to help with the activities ~~and~~ among the young people, asked him if he would like to study to be a Minister of the Episcopal Church. After much thought and consideration Antonio decided to try. He also followed the example of St. Andrew and called his brother, Aristides. And so it was that after much study and hard work the

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Villafañe brothers were ordained to the priesthood in January 1925. The first Puertorican clergy and a direct result of the work among young people.

My uncle continued as priest in charge of the work at St. Luke's. There he built with the help of the young people a basket ball court in the back yard of the Church/ And, my mother, who at that time was the Parish Worker at St. Luke's has often told me about the groups of young people who met there. St. Luke's playground and reading room meant worlds to those young people for St. Luke's was situated right in the center of the slum district of San Juan. Many of the present Cong. of St. John's Cathedral knew our Church there and four Priests found their vocation there.

My father was sent as assistant to Father Saylor in Mayaguez. He also started work among the young people. With the help of the boys he cleaned the rubbish from a big space between the mission buildings and then built up walls and laid out a concrete court. There they played volley ball, basket ball and the mission workers tennis/ He took his boys to other places to play and went with them to play. the beach and to the country and fine groups of St. Andrew Society and G.P. S. grew up there and are still there. Out of these groups we have today members of the Church who are trained nurses, civil engineers, agricultural engineers, sugar chemists and many others

From Mayaguez my father was sent to Vieques, a small island off the coast of Puerto Rico but considered part of P.R. Here he took charge of the old mission that had been without a priest, and old lady worker doing what she could until she died and my father was sent. By that time my father was married and I was nine months old. After renovating and fixing things up a

bit in Viequez my father organized a Sunday School for Spanish and English speaking children and also prepared a playground between the rectory and the Church. Many years later boys who played there came to my father in San Juan where he was in charge of one of the churches during the war, to have him baptize their children. One of these men is a government radio operator.

From Vieques my father was sent to Quebrada Limon to take charge of one of the largest missions in Puerto Rico and a 250 acre farm. This was not a new work but it needed reorganization and the people needed to learn much about the Episcopal Church. Quebrada Limon is up in the mountains some distance from Ponce. At that time the road was in a terrible condition and you had to ride up on horseback. There were no electric lights, telephone or running water/ A set of storage batteries and a motor was fixed up so light could be had for the Churches, and my father with the help of the people built a number of cisterns and so the mission had proper drinking water. There wasnt anything he could do about a telephone. The Church in Quebrada Limon became the true center of the community, besides the religious work there was a grade school at the mission, and a clinic. Branches of the Womans Auxiliary, Girls Friendly and boys society was formed. A playground was built and the boys taught to play Volley ball. When my father got the boys some uniforms to play in they refused to put on those short pants before the girls. But when a team from town came out to play in their uniforms the boys were convinced. Here at Quebrada Limon was where the First Youth Conference was held with young people from other missions as well as those of Quebrada Limon and under the direction of the Rev. Fr. Donald Gowe. The second Youth Conference was also held at Quebrada Limon. Since then we have had Young Conferences

at the Politecnic Institute at San German, P/ R., at
and at the Boy Scout grounds up at Guajataca
P. R. In all many Conferences have been held and young
people from all our missions on the island of Puerto Rico and
even from the neighboring island of St. Thomas have come. We
have been honored at these Conferences by many important visitors
from our Church here in the States/

Now to get back to Quebrada Limon, my father left there jus
after this last war started because he injured his back while
doing some repairs on one of the mission buildings and so could
not ride horse back which is very necessary for the work there.
He asked to be moved and he was sent to one of the new Churches
in San Juan. A young Puertorican priest and his wife, agraduate
of St. Luke's School of nursing in Ponce took charge in Quebrada
limon. A few years later the idea was concieved of starting an
Agricultural school in Quebrada Limon and a young continental
American priest came down to start it. We had the land and we
had building that could be used with some repair. However
after a little it was realized that the district there is too
dry and so when the opportunity presented itself for the church
to acquire land and buildings ~~from~~ ~~one~~ of the government projects
near San Juan the Bishop and all concerned felt that the effort
should be made. With the help of the Youth Offering here in the
States the dream is coing true. And now we will not only have
an ideal place for our Agrigultural School but also a place
belonging to the Episcopal Church for our Youth Conferences each
year.

My father is now at Holy Trinity in Ponce. Holy Trinity
is the oldest non-Roman Catholic work in the West Indies. There
is a large Puertorican Congregation and also a somewhat smaller

English Congregation. Here we have two groups of Woman's Auxiliary, one of Puertorican women and one of American women. There is a Branch of the Girls Friendly and Candidates, St. Andrew's Society, Boy Scout troop and Cubs and Young Peoples Fellowship. The Sisters of the Transfiguration who have their Convent in Ponce help greatly in the work at Holy Trinity. Fr. Gowe who I have mentioned elsewhere with regard to the first Youth Conference is also at Holy Trinity/ Fr. Gowe is also a Dr. on the Staff of St. Luke's Hospital, but he gives his spare time to Holy Trinity and has charge there of the Choir and music, and the work with the boys. At Holy Trinity they have just raised locally the money to buy a new organ and I wish all of you who are here today and myself could drop in on Christmas Eve night to hear the beautiful Christmas music under the direction of Fr. Gowe. Holy Trinity has produced five priests, besides a number of graduate nurses at St. Luke's and teachers.

You will forgive me for having mentioned my father so much but he has perhaps been in more missions on the island than anybody else and I felt that by following him we would kind of keep on the track/ I hope that some day some of you will visit Puerto Rico and see our Church's work for yourselves. I am sure you will be very welcome.