

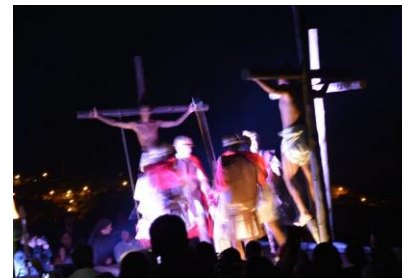
Laura Kyte & Fabio Gonzalez
Cachi, Salta, Argentina
April 2016



Who was visiting from Venezuela?

I hope you are refreshed after the Easter break and your days were filled with [peace, reflection and celebration](#) around the origin of this bank holiday! While there are similarities between rituals and celebrations across the world, here are a couple of traditions I consider unique to [Cachi](#):

- **Good Friday:** the *via crucis* starting in the main square and finishing rather spookily just outside the cemetery which is on a hill top. There are different stations where [Jesus' road to the Cross is acted out](#) by local residents, and finishing outside the village centre is symbolic of Jesus' crucifixion outside the city gate and even on top of a hill.



- **Burning Judas:** yes, that's right! On Good Friday, a rather cheery looking [Judas doll](#) is sat outside the municipality facing the main square, with a message saying that he betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. On Easter Saturday he is [hung from a rope](#) opposite the church and at night, [people gather to watch him burn](#)!



One the same weekend, we also held our second race of the year through the streets of [Cachi](#), another successful turn-out, especially the number of children. The following week, our church was thrilled to receive a visit from two pastors from the supporting Church in [Norway](#), one of whom was a former professional footballer from Venezuela, [Fernando de Ornelas](#) (any Crystal Palace or Queen's Park Rangers supporters? He played in these clubs in 1999 and 2001 respectively). This provided an excellent opening for the evangelical church to [serve](#) the people of Cachi through sport, and the visit also coincided with the [International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#) (April 6th). [Fabio](#) was very much a bridge between the church and the town council, suggesting topics that [Fernando](#) could talk about which would emphasise a [holistic approach to football](#), and promoting the visit on the radio and social media. We pray that those who attended the discussions will have been challenged and inspired by what they heard, and also see that [faith and sport](#), in this case football, can- and should always- go together.

The beginning of April was also an important time for many of Argentina's top distance runners seeking Olympic qualification. Twelve athletes headed to the [Rotterdam Marathon](#) for their last chance to secure a

place in Rio. I was in contact with two female athletes and a coach, and one of the girls asked for [prayer](#) and knowing her openness to faith, I sent her a [Bible verse](#) per day in the lead up to the race. Unfortunately she did not get the qualifying time, please pray that I would be a good friend and “chaplain” to her and also to the girls that did fulfil their dream and will form part of this year’s Olympic team.

Back in [Cachi](#), we pray that we might be good hosts and examples of Christ’s love to long-distance runner [SL](#) from Mar del Plata (Argentina’s athlete factory!). As you can see from the photos, which date from 2012, 2014 and just recently, we are often seen doing battle in races!



She has always been interested in hearing about the [faith](#) that brought me to Argentina, and I left a sports [New Testament](#) in her room, which she told me she had started reading. I pray for opportunities to follow this up over the course of the month she will be here, especially if she has any questions about what she reads. She also enjoys the devotionals I publish on Facebook, in the group “[Deporte y Biblia, ¿qué tiene que ver?](#)”, which I am thrilled to say that God continues to use to bless and encourage several athletes. It was through this that I made contact with a Christian middle distance runner from Buenos Aires, [FM](#), and was able to introduce myself recently during the **South American Gran Prix events and National 10.000m Championships** (where the photo on the right was taken) in [Mar del Plata](#). He is a firm Christian and a talented athlete, so it is a privilege to support him from afar and keep up to date with his progress.

An update on [Rio](#):

There is still no definite news but things do look more positive than not, so all international chaplains have been advised to start looking into flights and funding. For me, this would be the first days of [September](#) until the Paralympics finish on the 21st. Please continue to remember chaplaincy coordinator [Leandro](#) in your prayers; as Stuart, Verité director and Global Sports Chaplaincy secretary points out: “in London, Duncan Green had 4 years full-time to prepare the Religious Services. Leandro has had 9 months and he is still doing his normal full-time job as head of a seminary!”



Finally, [Fabio](#) will travel to [Buenos Aires](#) for the **National Athletics Championships** at the end of April. I was planning to join him but came down with a heavy heavy cold at the beginning of the month, so think it is best to prioritise getting back to full strength before thinking about competing again (prayers welcome!). We continue to pray for [God’s hand](#) over us as coach/athlete, that we may [shine](#) the light and life of Jesus Christ through this added and interesting dimension to our marriage!

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