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Decmeber 2020

COVID-19 Ravages El Paso County as Cases Soar

By Steven Zimmerman
Special to the Rio Grande

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is ravaging our community. El Paso County has more than 3,500 active cases; 1,000+ patients in hospital, with more than 300 in ICU. Sadly, El Paso has lost over 850 members of the community. Beyond the numbers, we can look at other markers that show just how dire our situation in El Paso has become.

With over 1,000 El Pasoans currently in hospital, coupled with the fact that our hospitalization rate is climbing, our hospitals are being pushed to their limit. Looking at the numbers, comparing the State of Texas to El Paso County, one out of every six hospitalizations are here in El Paso.

The County Morgue is equally overwhelmed. Performing the autopsy and required tests to determine if someone has died of COVID has caused our Medical Examiner to fall behind. As we've seen, the number of mobile morgues has increased to a total of ten.

The scene around University Medical Center (UMC) is grim. "We are seeing an increase of patients, in our ICU's," said Rosemary.

The severe cases are on a host of medical treatments and machines.

"A severe case is placed on nitrous oxide to help keep oxygen levels up," said Rosemary. "They are given up to fourteen different medications, via IV. We are placing patents on CRRT machines which work like your kidneys. We also place them on a FloTrac machine which measures arterial pressure. We also utilize a ventilator, as well as a rotoprone bed that keeps them face down and rotating side to side."

Other times, patents must be placed on an Ecmo machine, which is basically a bypass machine.

Walking the ICU ward can seem grim; it can almost cause one to lose hope. Yet, even here, God's Mercy can shine through the sadness.

"We finally transferred one patient out of ICU that was on a breathing machine," said Rosemary. "He was finally able to be taken off it. We are so proud!"

That, however, is not always the case.

"I had one patient with a lot of comorbidities," said Rosemary. "My last day with him, the

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Fr. Ben Flores, Vicar General and Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Northeast El Paso, Prays over staff members and COVID-19 patients at the Transmountain campus of Providnce Hospitals on November 23. *Photo by Fernie Cenicerros*

COVID-19 causa destrozos en el El Paso mientras los casos se disparan

Por Steven Zimmerman
Especial para el Río Grande

El Coronavirus (COVID-19) está haciendo estragos en nuestra comunidad. El condado de El Paso tiene más de 3.500 casos activos; más de 1.000 pacientes en el hospital, con más de 300 en la UCI. Lamentablemente, El Paso ha perdido más de 850 miembros de la comunidad.

Más allá de los números, podemos ver otros indicadores que muestran lo grave que se ha vuelto nuestra situación en El Paso.

Con más de 1.000 habitantes de El Paso actualmente hospitalizados, junto con el hecho de que nuestra tasa de hospitalización está aumentando, nuestros hospitales están siendo llevados al límite. Mirando los números, comparando el estado de Texas con el condado de El Paso, una de cada seis hospitalizaciones está aquí en El Paso.

La morgue del condado está igualmente abrumada. Realizar la autopsia y las pruebas necesarias para determinar si alguien ha muerto de COVID ha hecho que nuestro médico forense se quede atrás. Como hemos visto, el número de morgues móviles ha aumentado a un total de diez.

La escena alrededor del Centro Médico Universitario (UMC) es sombría.

"Estamos viendo un aumento de pacientes, en nuestras UCI", dijo Rosemary.

Los casos graves están en una gran cantidad de tratamientos médicos y máquinas.

"A los casos graves se les aplica óxido nítrico para ayudar a mantener altos los niveles de oxígeno", dijo Rosemary. "Se les administran hasta catorce medicamentos diferentes, por vía intravenosa. Estamos poniendo patents en las máquinas de CRRT que funcionan como sus

riñones. También las colocamos en una máquina FloTrac que mide la presión arterial. También utilizamos un ventilador, así como una cama robótica que los mantiene boca abajo y girando de lado a lado."

Otras veces, las patents deben ser colocadas en una máquina Ecmo, que es básicamente una máquina de bypass.

Caminar por la sala de la UCI puede parecer sombrío; casi puede hacer que uno pierda la esperanza. Sin embargo, incluso aquí, la Misericordia de Dios puede brillar a través de la tristeza.

"Finalmente transferimos a un paciente de la UCI que estaba con una máquina de respiración", dijo Rosemary. "Por fin se le pudo quitar. ¡Estamos tan orgullosos!"

Eso, sin embargo, no siempre es así.

"Tuve un paciente con muchas comorbididades", dijo Rosemary.

"En mi último día con él, la enfermera de heridas dijo que había desarrollado lo que parecía una úlcera terminal de Kennedy en su trasero, aunque estaba boca abajo en la cama. Murió al día siguiente".

Si uno logra salir de las máquinas, entonces se enfrenta a un período de rehabilitación.

"El trabajo de rehabilitación consiste en quitarle la traqueotomía al paciente, ayudarle a comer normalmente para que podamos quitarle el tubo de alimentación, terapia física y ocupacional para fortalecerlo, terapia del habla para ayudar a fortalecer los músculos que ayudan a tragar", añadió Rosemary. "Es un largo camino para ellos".

Luego, hay problemas cognitivos que uno puede enfrentar. Rosemary dijo que los niveles de saturación de oxígeno para

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Any Way the Wind Blows

Imagine me as a 15-year-old boy sitting in a math classroom at Bel Air High School in amazement at what I'm watching on the televised morning announcements. Blaring on the TV is the operatic section of Bohemian Rhapsody. "I'm just a poor boy, nobody loves me; he's just a poor boy from a poor family, sparing his life from this monstrosity." What I was watching was a bearded teacher donning a pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses responding back and forth with his students, lip-syncing to Bohemian Rhapsody. This video was hilarious, to say the

least. I asked myself, "Who is this teacher, and what class is this?" I had to find out.

Mr. Joe Barnes, HAM radio call letters K5FZH, was no ordinary teacher. I learned that very quickly as I enrolled in his advanced broadcasting class, my sophomore year of high school. He was probably one of the most down to earth people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. This fun-loving, Beatles enthusiast, dedicated family man, and teacher taught me far more than I can recount in this short reflection. But in honor of 20 years since his passing, I'd like to share with

you what I learned from Mr. Barnes.

"To make it in this business of broadcasting, you need to put your foot in the door and be willing to do anything that's asked of you, but you need just a smidge of cockiness," he used to tell his students when asked what it took to make it in the "business." I have to say to you faithful readers, that to this day, this rings more true than any other lesson he ever may have taught. Mr. Barnes was never afraid to get into anything that his students asked of him. Even if it meant that he would lip-sync

to Bohemian Rhapsody or play drums in the faculty jazz band.

Sadly, We lost Mr. Barnes in December of 2000 to a two-year battle with Pancreatic Cancer. I can attest that he lived life to the fullest. More than anything, however, I'd like to share that as he was battling cancer, it did not deter him from being where he felt he did his best, In-room 1100 at KBA studios in the basement of the Science and Library wing at Bel Air.

In the 20 years since his passing, whenever something happens in the national news, or whenever I had worked a long

event which involved some kind of video production. My mind always wanders back to him. I can't help but wonder how he would feel about the latest crazy news story. Most importantly, I can't help but wonder what he would think about how half a dozen of us from his broadcasting classes at Bel Air heeded his advice and made it in the "business." I have faith that wherever he is, he's smiling and rooting for us just as he did all those years ago.

De Cualquier Manera Que El Viento Suen...

Imáginate como un chico de 15 años sentado en un aula de matemáticas en el instituto Bel Air, asombrado por lo que estoy viendo en los anuncios de la mañana televisados. A todo volumen en la televisión está la sección de ópera de Bohemian Rhapsody. "Sólo soy un pobre chico, nadie me quiere; sólo es un pobre chico de una familia pobre, salvando su vida de esta monstruosidad." Obvio que esta es una traducion de la cancion de Bohemian Rhapsody. Lo que estaba viendo era un profesor barbudo con un par de gafas de sol Ray-Ban respondiendo con sus estudiantes, sincronizando los labios con la Rapsodia Bohemia.

Este video era divertidísimo, por decir algo. Me pregunté: "¿Quién es este profesor y qué clase es esta?" Tenía que averiguarlo.

El Sr. Joe Barnes, de la radio HAM, con letras de llamada K5FZH, no era un profesor ordinario. Lo aprendí muy rápido cuando me inscribí en su clase de radiodifusión avanzada, en mi segundo año de secundaria. Fue probablemente una de las personas más realistas que he tenido el placer de conocer. Este amante de la diversión, entusiasta de los Beatles, dedicado hombre de familia y maestro me enseñó mucho más de lo que puedo contar en esta breve reflexión. Pero en honor a los 20 años desde su

muerte, me gustaría compartir con ustedes lo que aprendí del Sr. Barnes.

"Para triunfar en este negocio de la radiodifusión, hay que poner el pie en la puerta y estar dispuesto a hacer cualquier cosa que se te pida, pero sólo necesitas una pizca de arrogancia", solía decir a sus alumnos cuando se le preguntaba qué se necesitaba para triunfar en el "negocio". Tengo que decirles a ustedes, fieles lectores, que hasta el día de hoy, esto suena más cierto que cualquier otra lección que él haya enseñado. El Sr. Barnes nunca tuvo miedo de meterse en nada de lo que sus estudiantes le pedían. Incluso si eso signifi-

caba que él haría playback con Bohemian Rhapsody o tocaría la batería en la banda de jazz de la facultad.

Lamentablemente, perdimos al Sr. Barnes en diciembre de 2000 en una batalla de dos años contra el cáncer de páncreas. Puedo atestiguar que vivió la vida al máximo. Sin embargo, más que nada, me gustaría compartir que mientras luchaba contra el cáncer, no le impidió estar donde sentía que hacía lo mejor posible, en la sala 1100 de los estudios de KBA en el sótano del ala de Ciencia y Biblioteca en Bel Air.

En los 20 años desde su fallecimiento, cada vez que algo sucede en las noticias nacionales,

o cada vez que había trabajado en un evento largo que involucraba algún tipo de producción de video. Mi mente siempre vuelve a él. No puedo evitar preguntarme cómo se sentiría con la última historia loca de las noticias. Y lo más importante, no puedo evitar preguntarme qué pensaría sobre cómo media docena de nosotros, de sus clases de radiodifusión en Bel Air, escuchamos su consejo y logramos entrar en el "negocio". Tengo fe en que dondequiera que esté, está sonriendo y apoyándonos como lo hizo hace años.

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INSEITZ INTO THE FAITH

A Different Kind of Christmas in El Paso!

Every year I try to pen a brief Christmas reflection and greeting that I include with the Christmas cards I send out. This year my card has an image of a print I have hanging in the entrance of my home. It is of a painting by Hal Marcus, an artist whose work I have admired since arriving in El Paso and whom I have had the privilege to get to know in recent months.

The painting is a colorful and whimsical look towards downtown El Paso with our beautiful St. Patrick's Cathedral front and center, a Nativity scene is in front of the church. Familiar buildings from downtown fill out the background. The painting is titled,

"Feliz Navidad".

This year our Christmas celebrations will likely be a bit muted. The Feast of Our beloved Lady of Guadalupe will be unlike any other we have experienced. Tears may mingle with the cries of "Christ is born", because we will not be able to see many of those family and friends whose presence has always brought joy to the Season. Some, we will not be able to see due to COVID safe practices. Some we will not see because their lives have been tragically cut short by this malevolent virus.

For this reason, I have wanted to reach out to you, dear brothers and sisters. Unfortunately,

I couldn't afford the postage to send a card to each one of you, but I do hold you close to my heart, more-so this year than ever!

So, I thought I would just share my Christmas card and greeting with you through my InSeitz column this year:

Alone for Christmas? Does the city or even your home seem like a cold dark place this year?

Look to the heart of the city and see not simply a church building, but a person; the One born among us to break down the walls of our loneliness and isolation.

Yes, a child is born. He is our child, our brother, our hope, our Savior!



Bishop Mark J. Seitz



Loneliness is vanquished for those who welcome him!

God has come to earth! No, not simply to earth, but to our city, our home, our lives!

Listen carefully and hear the angels sing.

This day heaven is wedded to earth and we are reconciled to God!

Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord!

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to you!

¡Una Clase Diferente De Navidad En El Paso!

Cada año trato de escribir una breve reflexión y saludo navideño que incluyo con las tarjetas de Navidad que envío. Este año mi tarjeta tiene una imagen de una impresión que tengo colgada en la entrada de mi casa. Es de un cuadro de Hal Marcus, un artista cuyo trabajo he admirado desde que llegué a El Paso y que he tenido el privilegio de conocer en los últimos meses.

La pintura es una colorida y caprichosa mirada hacia el centro de El Paso con nuestra hermosa Catedral de San Patricio al frente y en el centro, un pesebre está en frente de la iglesia. Edificios familiares del centro de la ciudad llenan el fondo. El cuadro se titula "Feliz Navidad".

Este año nuestras celebraciones navideñas probablemente serán un poco apagadas. La fiesta de nuestra amada Señora de Guadalupe será diferente a cualquier otra que hayamos experimentado. Las lágrimas se mezclarán con los gritos de "Cristo ha nacido", porque no podremos ver a muchos de esos familiares y

amigos cuya presencia siempre ha traído alegría a la Temporada. Algunos, no podremos verlos debido a las prácticas seguras de COVID. Algunos no los veremos porque sus vidas han sido trágicamente cortadas por este malévol virus.

Por esta razón, he querido llegar a ustedes, queridos hermanos y hermanas. Desafortunadamente, no pude pagar el franqueo para enviar una tarjeta a cada uno de ustedes, pero los llevo cerca de mi corazón, más que nunca este año.

Así que pensé en compartir mi tarjeta de Navidad y mi saludo con vosotros a través de mi columna de InSeitz este año:

¿Solo para Navidad? ¿La ciudad o incluso su casa parece un lugar frío y oscuro este año?

Miren al corazón de la ciudad y no vean simplemente una iglesia, sino una persona; la que nació entre nosotros para derribar los muros de nuestra soledad y aislamiento.

Sí, un niño ha nacido. ¡Es nuestro hijo, nuestro hermano, nuestra esperanza, nuestro Salvador!



¡La soledad es vencida por aquellos que lo acogen!

¡Dios ha venido a la tierra! No, no sólo a la tierra, sino a nuestra ciudad, nuestro hogar,

nuestras vidas!

Escuchen con atención y escuchen a los ángeles cantar.

¡Este día el cielo está unido a la tierra y nos reconciliamos con

Dios!

¡Hoy nace nuestro Salvador, Cristo el Señor!

¡Bendita y feliz Navidad para ti!

REJOICE AND BE GLAD

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Merry Christmas!

from all of us at the Catholic Diocese of El Paso

Fr. Jose Luis Garayoa, Dies due to COVID-19

By Fernie Cenicerros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

The Reverend Jose Luis Garayoa, OAR, 68, Pastor of Little Flower parish in the Mission Valley of El Paso, has died from complications due to COVID-19.

Rev. Garayoa is originally from Spain and is a member of the Order of the Augustinian Recollects. He was ordained to the priesthood in July of 1976 and has served in various dioceses worldwide, including years of mission work in Sierra Leone, Africa, and more recently in the Diocese of Las Cruces and the Diocese of El Paso. In 2018, Bishop Mark Seitz named him Pastor at his most recent assignment at Little Flower. Rev. Garayoa was a fervent believer and humanitarian who ministered to the poor all over the world throughout his priestly ministry.



The Reverend Jose Luis Garayoa, OAR, 68, Pastor of Our Lady of Little Flower in the Mission Valley of El Paso, has died from complications due to COVID-19. *Photo Courtesy of joseluisgarayoa.com*

Garayoa, who was diagnosed with COVID-19 around a week ago, died in the Augustinian Recollect's community home located near the Parish of Guardian Angel on Tuesday, November 24,

2020.

Currently, the community home houses two other priests of the Order of Augustinian Recollects who have also been diagnosed with COVID-19, one of whom is asymptomatic and the other is presently in stable condition.

Bishop Mark Seitz expressed his sorrow in a statement upon the news of Fr. Garayoa's passing.

"Fr. Jose Luis Garayoa will never be replaced, but we will trust the Lord who made him and was so clearly revealed through him, to care for His faithful servant as well as for the bereft family he leaves behind," he said.

Plans for a Memorial Mass for Fr. Garayoa are on hold until the Diocese can hold services once the current suspended status is lifted.

P. José Luis Garayoa, Muere Como Consecuencia De Covid-19

By Fernie Cenicerros
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

El reverendo José Luis Garayoa, OAR, 68, párroco de la parroquia Little Flower en el Valle de la Misión de El Paso, ha muerto por complicaciones debido a COVID-19.

El reverendo Garayoa es originario de España y es miembro de la Orden de los Agustinos Recoletos. Fue ordenado sacerdote en julio de 1976 y ha servido en varias diócesis de todo el mundo, incluyendo años de trabajo misionero en Sierra Leona, África, y más recientemente en la Diócesis



de Las Cruces y la Diócesis de El Paso. En 2018, el obispo Mark Seitz lo nombró párroco en su más reciente misión en Little

Flower. El reverendo Garayoa era un ferviente creyente y humanitario que atendía a los pobres de todo el mundo a lo largo de su ministerio sacerdotal.

Garayoa, a quien se le diagnosticó COVID-19 hace aproximadamente una semana, murió en la casa de la comunidad de los Agustinos Recoletos situada cerca de la Parroquia del Ángel de la Guarda el martes 24 de noviembre de 2020.

En la actualidad, el hogar comunitario alberga a otros dos sacerdotes de la Orden de Agustinos Recoletos a los que también se les ha diagnosticado COVID-19, uno de los cuales es asintomático

y el otro se encuentra actualmente en estado estable.

El obispo Mark Seitz expresó su dolor en una declaración al recibir la noticia del fallecimiento del P. Garayoa.

"El Padre José Luis Garayoa nunca será reemplazado, pero confiaremos en el Señor que lo hizo y que se reveló tan claramente a través de él, para que cuide de su fiel servidor así como de la familia que deja atrás", dijo.

Los planes para una misa conmemorativa para el P. Garayoa están en suspenso hasta que la Diócesis pueda celebrar los servicios una vez que se levante el actual estado de suspensión.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FATHER!

Fr. Matthew Robert Vierno, FSSP	12/2
Fr. Cong Chi Vo	12/2
Fr. Rolando Fonseca	12/3
Fr. Jose Emilio Flores, OFM	12/5
Fr. Victorino Lorezca	12/12
Jose Morales Feregrino OFM	12/18

ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Jovino Antonio Martinez	12/5/2008
Apolinar Samboni	12/6/2014
Gleen Carpe	12/6/2014
Juan Victor Gamino Trejo, MNM	12/8/1994
Alan Oluoch Alaka	12/14/2013
Wilson Cuevas	12/20/1984
Antonio Mena	12/20/1984

Diocese offers assistance for victims of sexual abuse

Bishop Mark J. Seitz invites anyone who has been a victim of sexual abuse by a priest, deacon, religious, or any minister of the church, to contact the Victim's Assitance Coordinator, Mrs. Susan Martinez LCSW, at (915) 872-8465 or the Office of the Chancery, (915) 872-8407. The Church desires the healing of anyone that has been harmed.

La diócesis ofrece asistencia a las víctimas de abusos sexuales

El Obispo Mark J. Seitz invita a cualquier persona que haya sido víctima de abuso sexual por parte de un sacerdote, diácono, religioso o cualquier ministro de la iglesia, a contactar a la Coordinadora de Asistencia a las Víctimas, la Sra. Susan Martínez LCSW, al (915) 872-8465 o a la Oficina de la Cancillería, (915) 872-8407. La Iglesia desea la curación de cualquiera que haya sido dañado.

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- COVID Increase From Page 1

wound care nurse said he had developed what looked like a Kennedy Terminal Ulcer on his backside, even though he was facedown in bed. He died the next day.”

If one makes it off the machines, then they face a period of rehabilitation.

“The rehab work is they take the tracheostomy out of the patient, help them to eat normally so that we may remove the feed tube, physical and occupational therapy for strength, speech therapy to help build up the muscles that aid in swallowing,” Rosemary added. “It’s a long road for them.”

Then, there are cognitive problems one may face. Rosemary

said that the oxygen saturation levels for some patients could be as low as fifty. This can cause one to process information slower and cause issues when “relearning” some of the most basic activities.

“The brain lacks the O2,” said Rosemary, “and this causes a level of brain damage.”

What can we do to prevent illness and being exposed to COVID-19?

According to the Centres for Disease Control, we should:

- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Put distance between yourself and other people (at least

6 feet).

- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily.
- CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings and when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Masks may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.

In addition to this, we should follow the measures laid out

by the County of El Paso. We should remain home, unless necessary. When shopping, only one member of the family should go. We also need to avoid parties and groups larger than ten people.

We should also follow the example of Bishop Mark Seitz.

On November 9th, Bishop Seitz announced that Parishes inside of El Paso County remain in a suspended status. This means that all church gatherings are limited to just those necessary to facilitate the live-streaming of Mass. Funerals, weddings, baptisms, and similar liturgies are suspended.

“By keeping our Parishes in El Paso County to suspended status, we will do our part to continue to ensure the safety of not only our Catholic Faithful but all mem-

bers of our El Paso Community,” said Bishop Seitz. “I urge you to continue to pray for our entire community and especially for those who are ill at this time and for our leaders. You are in my prayers, as well. United in love for one another we will come through these difficult times.”

Let us follow the example of the Church, our leaders and the men and women on the front lines and remain at home, unless necessary. With this and prayer, we will make it through this.

During this time, let us ask God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and Our Lady of Guadalupe to have mercy upon us and protect our community and us during our time of need.

- COVID Continuada de la Pagina 1

algunos pacientes podrían ser tan bajos como cincuenta. Esto puede hacer que uno procese la información más lentamente y causar problemas al “reaprender” algunas de las actividades más básicas.

“El cerebro carece de O2”, dijo Rosemary, “y esto causa un nivel de daño cerebral”.

¿Qué podemos hacer para prevenir la enfermedad y la exposición a COVID-19?

De acuerdo con los Centros para el Control de Enfermedades, deberíamos:

- Lavarse las manos a menudo, ya sea con agua y jabón durante 20 segundos o con un desinfectante de manos que contenga al menos un 60% de alcohol.
- Evitar el contacto cercano con personas enfermas.
- Ponga distancia entre usted y otras personas (por lo menos 6 pies).
- Cúbrase la boca y la nariz con una máscara cuando esté cerca de otras personas.
- Cúbrase al toser o estornudar con un pañuelo de papel, y luego tire el pañuelo a la basura.
- Limpie y desinfecte diariamente los objetos y superficies que se tocan con frecuencia.

● Los CDC recomiendan que las personas usen máscaras en lugares públicos y cuando estén cerca de personas fuera de su hogar, especialmente cuando otras medidas de distanciamiento social son difíciles de mantener.

● Las máscaras pueden ayudar a evitar que las personas que tienen COVID-19 contagien el virus a otros.

Además de esto, debemos seguir las medidas establecidas por el Condado de El Paso. Deberíamos permanecer en casa, a menos que sea necesario. Cuando vayan de compras, sólo un miembro de la familia debe ir. También debemos evitar las fiestas y los grupos más grandes de diez personas.

También debemos seguir el ejemplo del obispo Mark Seitz.

El 9 de noviembre, el obispo Seitz anunció que las parroquias del condado de El Paso permanecen en estado de suspensión. Esto significa que todas las reuniones de la iglesia se limitan a las necesarias para facilitar la transmisión en vivo de la misa. Los funerales, bodas, bautizos y liturgias similares están suspendidos.

“Manteniendo nuestras parroquias en el condado de El Paso en estado de suspensión, haremos nuestra parte para continuar garantizando la seguridad no sólo




Varios Sacerdotes de la diocese de El Paso visitaron a hospitales en todo el condado de El Paso para orar por los afectados de la Pandemia de COVID-19. *Photo por Fernie Cenicerros*

de nuestros fieles católicos sino de todos los miembros de nuestra comunidad de El Paso”, dijo el obispo Seitz. “Les insto a seguir rezando por toda nuestra comunidad y especialmente por los que están enfermos en este momento y por nuestros líderes. Ustedes también están en mis oraciones.

Unidos en el amor de unos por otros, superaremos estos tiempos difíciles”.

Sigamos el ejemplo de la Iglesia, de nuestros líderes y de los hombres y mujeres en el frente y permanezcamos en casa, a menos que sea necesario. Con esto y con la oración, saldremos adelante.

Durante este tiempo, pidamos a Dios Padre, a su Hijo, a Jesucristo y a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe que se apiade de nosotros y que proteja a nuestra comunidad y a nosotros en nuestros momentos de necesidad.



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Community Fund Established to Restore Sacred Heart

By Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

Volunteers from around the El Paso community and across the state have come together to work on the first ever project of its kind in the Segundo Barrio: Restore Sacred Heart Church. In 2021, the Segundo Barrio National Historic District will be established and the Segundo Barrio can look forward to an architectural rebirth.

Executive Committee members of Restore Sacred Heart Church are Bishop Mark Seitz, church leaders, elected representatives, and professionals specializing in architecture, history, historic preservation, and related fields. The Executive Committee is co-chaired by Father Rafael García, SJ, Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, and Dr. Max Grossman, a professor at The University of Texas at El Paso. Professionals and residents of the Segundo Barrio, strong supporters of the cause, make up the Advisory Council. The volunteer group will apply for the necessary grants and tax credits, raise funds, and oversee the restoration process from the solicitation of architectural bids through the completion of all work.

The mission of Restore Sacred Heart Church is to restore Sacred Heart Church, the most iconic building in El Paso’s Segundo Barrio, along with the adjoining former Sacred Heart School building, now the Pastoral Center, and the rectory, the building that houses the Jesuit residence and church offices. The buildings of the Sacred Heart Church complex are between 91 and 127 years old and in desperate need of restoration and infrastructural upgrades. Limited financial resources of the church, located three blocks from the Mexican border, have made this impossible. The Restore Sacred Heart Church Fund is a vehicle for



Fr. Rafael Garcia, S.J., Pastor and Co-Chair of Restore Sacred Heart Church Sacred Heart Church looks to the future resoration of the Historic Sacred Hear Parish in Segundo Barrio. *Photo Courtesy of the Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso.*

those who wish to contribute. The Foundation will oversee the distribution of funds intended to support the Restore Sacred Heart Church Project.

Rev. Carlos M. Pinto, S.J., an Italian immigrant from the Naples Province, arrived in El Paso in 1892 after he and a group of prominent Jesuits fled the 1860 Revolution and headed

for the American West to serve as missionaries. They would lay the foundation for what is today the Catholic Diocese of El Paso. Fr. Pinto was made superior and eventually came to be known as the “apostle and masterbuilder of El Paso.” He immediately set about establishing two churches to meet the language, cultural, and religious needs of the En-

glish and Spanish-speaking Catholics, which were primarily Mexican immigrants. Sacred Heart Church and the “sister church”, Immaculate Conception, which eventually became the provisional Cathedral in 1914, were completed in June, 1893. The Jesuit residence was added in 1898 and expanded in 1911 to serve all area Jesuits. A second floor

was added to the school in 1899. The current church replaced the original building in 1928-29. Under the leadership of Fr. Pinto, the Jesuits built 14 churches and seven schools between 1892 and 1917. Sacred Heart and Immaculate Conception are the oldest Catholic churches in the City of El Paso.

Sacred Heart Church continues to be an anchor in the historic neighborhood called the Segundo Barrio and the Jesuits continue to serve and minister. Throughout the years, the church has served the community’s spiritual needs and reached beyond that by providing services and opportunities for individuals seeking to improve their lives. Along with the Jesuit community and many friends, benefactors and volunteers, the church has been able to respond to the needs of the area. The Social Service Center provides various weekly adult classes, Catechism classes prepare the youth to receive their sacraments, and Project Gabriel and St. Vincent de Paul help those who find themselves in crisis.

The restoration of Sacred Heart Church is a unique, significant, and impactful project for the soon-to-be realized Segundo Barrio National Historic District, the community at large, and the state of Texas. The Catholic Foundation invites you to be part of this historic event.

You can contribute with a credit card at elpasodiocese-foundation.org or mail a check to Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso, 499 St. Matthews Street, Building G, El Paso, Texas 79907, Attn: Restore Sacred Heart Church. For more information and to discuss other ways to give, please contact Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at slarkin@elpasodiocese.org, 915-872-8412 or directly at 915-433-2003.

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Cathedral Alumnus Gives Back

By Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

The Catholic Foundation is proud to announce the Ernie and Nora Herrera Fund for the Cathedral High School Alumni Association Fund. The contribution was a matching gift inspired by an invitation from the Cathedral High School Alumni Association to younger alums to leave a legacy. Ernie was the first to step up and he hopes to inspire his Cathedral brothers to do the same. A first generation American and the first to graduate college in his family, Ernie (CHS ‘92), credits his time at Cathedral for making him the man he is today.

Ernie lights up when he talks about his years at Cathedral, recalling the days when he worked in the school cafeteria and the men he met there who would become lifelong friends. He also remembers the incredible sacrifices his parents made to send him to Cathedral and his very humble beginnings. It’s clear that Ernie never forgets where he came from and that probably accounts



The Catholic Foundation is proud to announce the Ernie and Nora Herrera Fund for the Cathedral High School Alumni Association Fund. *Photo Courtesy of the Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso*

for his modesty and empathy; he always wants to help others in any way he can. Ernie and his wife, Nora, a 1992 graduate of Loretto Academy, founded The Herrera Group, a wealth management firm, in 1999. They met in college—Nora had been admitted to Stanford and Ernie to Caltech—but both


remained at The University of Texas at El Paso where their paths would cross. Ernie received a degree in Business Administration, after changing his major from Engineering. The couple has four kids, including a graduate of Loretto Academy. They are both involved in many community efforts and organizations locally, and travel the country and the world. But El Paso will always be their home and their priority. The Ernie and Nora Herrera Fund for the Cathedral High School Alumni Association Fund was also made in honor of their son, Brandon, who will graduate from Cathedral in 2021. Ernie and Nora are instilling a life of prayer, service and giving in all of their children.

The Cathedral High School Alumni Association, established by the first graduating class in 1928, seeks to continue the tradition of Lasallian brotherhood and leadership by bringing alumni together, recognizing the achievements of the alumni community, and raising scholarship funds for deserving and com-

mitted students. Their mission is “to bring alumni back home—in body and in spirit—to the school that helped shape the men we are today.”

The Cathedral High School Alumni Association Fund, an endowed fund for scholarships managed by the Catholic Foundation, was established with a gift of \$25,000 in 2007. The fund value is now close to \$400,000. The fund’s annual distribution provides scholarships for young men who would not otherwise be able to attend Cathedral High School.

You can contribute with a credit card on the Foundation’s website at clf2020.org or mail your check to Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso, 499 St. Matthews Street, Building G, El Paso, Texas 79907, Attn: Catholic Legacy Fund + Fund Name. For more information and to discuss other ways to give, please contact Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at slarkin@elpasodiocese.org, 915-872-8412 or directly at 915-433-2003.



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Foundation Announces Funds Established in Memory of Fr. Matty

By Sofia Larkin
Major Gifts Officer

Rev. Richard A. “Rick” Matty† was chosen as the 2020 recipient of the Catholic Foundation’s Dei Gratia Award. The Dei Gratia Award, Latin for “By the Grace of God”, recognizes an individual, couple, or organization for their servant leadership, outstanding contribution to the Diocese of El Paso and our Catholic community, and their dedication to being good stewards of God’s grace. He would have been honored posthumously at the 14th Annual Foundation of Faith Dinner, however, the pandemic forced a change of plans. The event went virtual but there is still an opportunity to do something for Fr. Rick.

We want you to be a part of honoring Fr. Matty in a different and very special way this year and invite you to join a distinguished group in creating the Rev. Richard A. Matty Fund for the St. Patrick Cathedral Historic Preservation Fund, the Seminarian Education Endowment Fund, or the Retired Priest Appreciation Fund. Gifts in any amount are welcome.

Fr. Matty was often described as an inspiring person who would give you his time and attention. He was a great preacher and counselor, and had a gift for leading people to what they needed in ministry and in life. His passing on July 16, 2012 left the community reeling and since that time social media lights up with messages for Fr. Matty on his birthday and the anniversary of his death.

This honor will provide the community with ways to cele-




brate the life and vocation of a great priest and one of the giants of the Diocese. We’ll celebrate Fr. Rick’s memory at the 15th Annual Foundation of Faith Event: Live Your Faith Out Loud with Jim Caviezel in 2021.

We simply don’t tell you often enough how important you are to

the Diocese of El Paso. Without the help of generous individuals like you, where would we be? Through your ongoing support, you are an essential part of our mission to ensure the future of our Catholic faith by promoting stewardship as a way of life. Fr. Matty would be incredibly

proud of how far we’ve come... together!
You can contribute with a credit card on the Foundation’s website at clf2020.org or mail your check to Foundation for the Diocese of El Paso, 499 St. Matthews Street, Building G, El Paso, Texas 79907, Attn: Fr.

Matty Fund + Fund Name. For more information and to discuss other ways to give, please contact Major Gifts Officer Sofia Larkin at slarkin@elpasodiocese.org, 915-872-8412 or directly at 915-433-2003.



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Should I Get Vaccinated?



Fr. Tad Pacholczyk

Recently, many people have been reaching out with questions about vaccines. So, I thought it would be helpful to mention some of the most common ones and try to provide some answers.

Are there sound medical reasons to oppose vaccination? There can be, but vaccines typically provide a path towards individual protection and herd immunity that involves less burden and risk than becoming infected with a disease. Today's childhood vaccination schedule protects against more than a dozen different diseases. Some individuals, though, may need to decline vaccines if they have a compromised immune system or an allergy to one of the ingredients. When a vaccine is determined to be safe and effective, it will often make sense for healthy individuals to choose, on their own initiative, to get immunized.

Are vaccines safe? The safety

profile of vaccines is typically verified by extensive clinical trials involving more than 30,000 participants. Even after successful safety testing, children or adults can develop symptoms or problems, apparently from an inoculation they received. When the problem is further investigated, it may turn out to be a separate health issue unrelated to vaccination. Still, vaccines are not a zero-risk proposal, and on rare occasions, adverse events do occur. No medical intervention is ever completely risk-free. The risk of complications or side effects from vaccines, being reasonably low overall, can be deemed acceptable when compared to the prospect of complications that may arise from the disease itself. For generations, some of those complications included family members living in an iron lung after being ravaged by polio, married individuals rendered infertile from mumps, and infants dying due to whooping cough. Recent generations have been shielded from these types of devastating outcomes through the availability of vaccines.

Are there ethical reasons not to receive vaccines? Certain concerns of conscience arise when cell lines derived from abortions are used in the development and

production of vaccines. Vaccines should not be manufactured in this way, and pharmaceutical companies should not make use of these fetal cell lines. The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has noted, however, that when vaccines have been produced this way, it is morally permissible to receive them. When equivalent alternative vaccines that don't rely on such cell lines are available, however, those should clearly be the preferred option.

Why wouldn't it be wrong to receive a vaccine made from aborted fetal cell lines? No moral evil is committed by those who get inoculated with vaccines made from problematic cell lines; rather those who originally exploited aborted children for their cells, or established pharmaceutical company policies that rely on the abortion-derived cells, commit moral evils. The one receiving the vaccine has no causal connection to these wrongful decisions made previously by others, and the end user cannot be held culpable for their wrongdoing. Even so, the Vatican emphasizes that when we receive vaccines manufactured in this way, we should take steps to register our disagreement and call on pharmaceutical compa-

nies to reformulate their vaccines using alternative and ethically acceptable cell sources. Fortunately, none of the 2020-2021 flu vaccines use aborted fetal material, a common concern as the winter season draws near. However, even if they did, it would be ethically permissible to receive the vaccine as an end user, as explained.

If a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available, would we be obliged as Christians and as citizens to take it to defeat the spread of the virus? Each person must evaluate his or her individual situation and make a good prudential judgment regarding the benefit-to-burden ratio when accepting a COVID-19 vaccine. For example, health care workers who have not been exposed to COVID-19 should seriously consider the benefits of getting vaccinated, and their workplace may even require it. The elderly and other vulnerable populations should carefully consider the benefits as well. For younger individuals with very low chances of detrimental outcomes there may be less urgency, particularly if they do not have any contact with vulnerable populations. Governments should not compel citizens to accept COVID-19 vaccinations, but rather inform

them of the benefits and risks while encouraging them to carefully decide for themselves.

What about the new technologies behind RNA vaccines which have never been used before in humans? The criteria for vaccine safety and efficacy are generally well-established and won't differ fundamentally for a COVID-19 RNA vaccine when compared to other more standard types of vaccines. In light of the various studies that have already been done in animals, and presupposing rigorous human clinical trials, it should soon become clear whether mRNA vaccines are as safe and effective as other vaccines.

These kinds of questions about vaccinations and human health merit attention, as they manifest an important desire both for sound scientific information and ethical clarity.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.

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Scale Down And Measure Up



Janet M. Crowe

Years ago, a cousin invited me to accompany her to a store on Christmas Eve for one last item to place beneath the tree. Since we live in the desert southwest, the weather outside was neither snowy nor frightful, as in the popular song, but it was cold and windy, certainly not my preferred shopping weather. However, in the interests of family togetherness, we bundled up to venture out for that one item that she felt she needed. I must admit that I was curious to discover what special gift would make her family's Christmas complete.

Wind gusts colored our noses quite rosy as we scurried across the parking lot. Once inside the store, we momentarily paused to appreciate the warmth. My cousin then pulled from her pocket a list handwritten in childish lettering.

"I've managed to get everything on his list," she announced proudly, "except this toy that he added just the other day."

To say that I was surprised was an understatement. Images of her young son drifted through my mind as I recalled him sitting in front of the television, studiously watching every toy commercial that invaded the house with its "buy me" message.

"Are you serious?" I uttered in disbelief, never being one to shy away from getting myself in trouble with family members. "I can't believe you bought every toy on a list that pretty much matches the catalog from a major toy store!"

"Well, of course, I did," my cousin declared defensively – yes, it was clear, I was in trouble once again. "I want him to know how much I love him."

I bit my tongue. We located the toy and returned home. Christmas morning arrived, but the lovely tree had become hidden by a mountain of wrapped and beribboned boxes. After the unwrapping and oohing and ahing were over, my husband and I chuckled as we watched the children having a wonderful time playing inside the empty boxes while the sparkling new toys littered the floor. However, we, amazingly, had the good sense to say nothing.

That was the year we decided to limit the number of presents given to our own children. Needless to say, we were often in trouble from doting aunt and grandparents who wished to show their love in the form of a multitude of gifts. However, we managed to stay firm, successfully, more often than not.

The reward to our efforts came the year our young children



decided, unbeknownst to us, to take inventory of the gifts beneath the tree. We walked into the room to discover that they had carefully separated their wrapped gifts – one pile from the extended family members and then, in another much smaller pile, the gifts from their mean parents. At least, that's how we felt when we saw them standing before the two relatively small, but vastly different, stacks of presents.

"Look, it's just like you said!" they joyfully declared. "We each get three presents, just like baby Jesus received from the Wise Men who visited Him in Bethlehem." Then one of them pointed to the larger pile and added, "Oh, we also get these other presents, but they don't count because they're extra."

Our hearts fairly exploded with pride and awe at the amazing and innocent wisdom of children. They had understood and taken to heart all of our discussions about the meaning of Christmas and the message of the Christ Child's love for us, as opposed to the commercial side of this holy season. What better Christmas gift could any parent ever hope to receive?

This year, we are hoping to reinvigorate the tradition of limiting the gift-giving part of Christmas and multiplying the true meaning behind the season. Only one present each just as a

token to celebrate the love we know we have for one another. Then, a gift is also to be given to one of the less fortunate of our brothers and sisters in God's extensive family.

Rather than claiming credit for the idea, I must applaud the efforts of a class of confirmation students who, years ago, hosted a baby shower for Mary and her precious baby. Inviting the entire parish to participate, they collected diapers, blankets, adorable baby outfits, cases of formula, hand-knitted baby afghans and booties, crib sheets, and dozens of other baby necessities. In fact, several vans were loaded with gifts to be donated to Guiding Star to help mothers in need. It seemed that many parishioners were happy to join the students in celebrating Advent and the

coming of the Christ Child in such a meaningful way.

In the same spirit of giving, there are generous children who choose to donate their birthday gifts to those less fortunate. New toys are nice, but I imagine the joy those children receive is far greater when they present those brightly wrapped presents to children living in shelters or whose parents are suffering economically. Joy is in the giving, not the receiving.

Due to the current pandemic, many of us are unable to attend the traditional family gatherings and celebratory meals. However, instead of complaining, there are families, restaurants and even food trucks who are cooking up their family favorites and then serving the delicious dinners to the homeless and those less

fortunate than themselves. Feed my lambs, Jesus said.

Everyone understands that money is tight for many this year. Economic shutdowns, closed businesses, reduced paychecks, unemployment – these are all difficulties that can cause us to feel helpless in making Christmas a special time for our family. Instead, maybe we should count the real blessings we have, especially family and friends, and think of celebrating on a smaller scale. After all, the first Christmas was celebrated in a humble barn rather than in a palace fit for the king of kings. Let's scale down and measure up to God's standards.

What gift would the Christ Child enjoy receiving from us this year?



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Padre Wilson Cuevas

En un artículo que leí recientemente, Neil Gallagher, un reconocido autor, escribió acerca del agradecimiento Decía: “Hoy, agradezco a Dios porque: Puedo ver: El colorido del arco iris, el entramado de un copo de nieve, la luz radiante del sol, los colores del atardecer. Puedo oler: Los pescados frescos, los limones recién cortados, el café humeante, el bebe empolvado con talco. Puedo escuchar: El ruido de los carros, el timbre del teléfono. La melodía del canto y de los instrumentos, el grito de los niños. Puedo sentir: El abrazo de mi pareja, de los hijos, de los amigos. El aire frio y la punzada del dolor. Mí corazón la tiendo y mis ojos pestañeando. Las venas de una hoja. Puedo probar: El chile picante en mi lengua, el crujir de las papas fritas y la suavidad del yogurt, la accidentes de la toronja recién cortada y la dulzura de la miel de abejas.

Hoy doy gracias por mis ojos, por mi nariz, mis oídos, mi tacto, mi lengua, sendas para conocer lo bueno del mundo y la bondad de Dios. Hoy doy gracias por mi familia y los amigos, mi fe y mi bandera. Hoy, digo: “Señor,

me has dado tanto. Dame una sola cosa más, UN CORAZON AGRADECIDO”! Este es un hermoso pensamiento, Gracias Neil, por las bellas palabras que comunican un mensaje con tanta claridad.

Son una, mejor dicho dos palabras tan sencillas, pero que salidas del corazón se vuelven mágicas y transformadoras: Ellas son: GRACIAS...MUCHAS GRACIAS! No hay sentimiento más noble que la gratitud. A veces se nos olvida decir con una sonrisa gracias, muchas gracias... A quien nos hizo la comida, a quien nos arreglo la ropa, a quien nos cede el paso, a quien nos brinda compañía, a quien nos ama y a quien nos critica o corrige, justamente porque nos ama.

Nadie mejor que las mamas saben del amor y de dar gracias. La señora Gloria Molina, le daba gracias a Dios de la siguiente manera:

“Oh Dios, te doy gracias, Por mi hijo que no limpia su cuarto, pero está viendo la tele, porque significa que está en casa y no en las calles. Por los descuentos en mi sueldo, porque significa que estoy trabajando. Por el desorden que tengo que limpiar después de una fiesta, porque significa que estuve rodeada de seres queridos. Por la ropa que me queda apretada, porque significa que tengo suficiente para comer. Por mi sombra que me ve trabajar, porque significa que puedo salir al sol. Por el sácate que tengo

que cortar, ventanas que limpiar, baños que organizar, eso significa que tengo una casa. Por las quejas que escucho acerca del gobierno, porque significa que tenemos libertad de expresión. Por el lugar para estacionar mi vehículo que encuentro al final del estacionamiento, porque significa que tengo carro. Por la señora que esta detrás de mi en la iglesia y que desentona al cantar, porque significa que puedo oír. Por la cantidad de ropa que tengo que lavar y planchar, porque significa que tengo ropa para vestirme. Por el cansancio y los dolores musculares al final del día, por significa que fui capaz de trabajar duro. Por el despertador que suena temprano todas las mañanas, porque significa que estoy viva. Y finalmente por la cantidad de mensajes en mi celular y en mi Email que recibo, porque eso significa que tengo amigas y amigos que piensan en mi. Cuando pienses que en la vida todo te va mal, léelo otra vez”...

Todos tenemos tantas cosas que agradecerle a Dios! Solo algunos ejemplos: Si te levantaste esta mañana con más salud que enfermedad... Tu estas mas bendecido que muchos que no llegaron ni siquiera a ver este día... Si tiene donde vivir, comer y dormir. Si tienes un trabajo por el que pagan un salario y si tiene dinero en el banco o en tu cartera estas muy bendecido si todavía no te has contagiado Coronavirus, y no te ha

afectado confinamiento en tu casa o el temor de morir en la soledad siéntete muy agradecido.

Si tus padres están aún vivos y aun están casados, debes estar muy agradecido. Si tienes las cosas necesarias y puedes escuchar la Misa Dominical desde tu casa debes estar muy agradecido. Si has podido ser generoso y caritativo en medio de esta pandemia, dale gracias a Dios que te participa del privilegio de tener para compartir con los demás...

Para agradecer hacen falta dos condiciones: reconocer que no se nos debe, que no se merece y valorar lo que nos dan. Ante el Señor la deuda de gratitud es inmensa. Todo es don suyo. Empezando por la vida, su primer regalo. Y acabando por la gracia que ha infundir en nuestras almas. Ese es el mayor regalo que Dios puede darnos. Nos hace hijos suyos y capases de una felicidad sobrehumana, divina. Nunca le agradeceremos bastante.

San Pablo nos pregunta: Que tienes que no hayas recibido (1 Corintios 4,7). Cuanto más uno cree tener, mas deudor debe sentirse. Y mas razón para estar agradecido. Debemos mucho y a muchos. Cuanta gente nos ha ayudado a lo largo de la vida. Miles de personas han prestado su voz a Dios, sus manos y su corazón para hacer posible que su amor paternal llegara a nosotros. Todos tenemos sobrados motivos para pasarnos la vida dando gracias. La Gratitud es una virtud. Que tan

agradecido soy? Muchas veces con Dios nuestro Señor pensamos que le hacemos favores y que El debe estarnos agradecido. Tenemos conciencia de bienhechores, en lugar de tener conciencia de deudores. La realidad es otra. El no nos debe nada. A El se lo debemos todo. Todo lo nuestro ante Dios es deuda. Y es inútil intenta saldarla: Dios no nos pasa facturas. Lo único que nos queda es agradecer constantemente y por todo.

Un hombre que fue asaltado por unos ladrones que le robaron su cartera y su celular. El oraba a Dios, así: “Señor, ayúdame a estar agradecido; primero porque nunca antes había sido robado; segundo porque aunque se llevaron mi cartera, no me quitaron la vida; tercero, porque aunque se llevaron todo lo que tenía yo, no era mucho; y cuarto, porque fui yo quien fui robado y no quien robo”. A cuantas personas en medio de esta pandemia hemos consolado y ayudado. Son tiempos muy difíciles, muchas personas conocidas, amigas se han contagiado y algunos han muerto. Démosle gracias a Dios, que seguimos con vida y que podamos seguir ayudando a otros, para que con su ayuda y nuestra ayuda salgamos adelante de esta pandemia y podamos aprender a valorar y agradecer todo lo que Dios y nuestros prójimos han hecho por nosotros. Y por leer esta columna...Gracias...Muchas gracias!

Thank You Thank You Very Much!

In an article I read recently, Neil Gallagher, a renowned author, wrote about appreciation. It said: “Today, I thank God because: I can see: the color of the rain-bows, the web of a snowflake, the radiant light of the sun, the colors of the evening sunset; I can smell: fresh fish, freshly cut lemons, steaming coffee, a baby sprinkled with talcum powder. I can hear: the noise of cars, the ringing of the telephone, the melody of song and instruments, the playful cry of children. I can feel: the hug of my partner, of my children, of my friends, the cold air and the stab of pain, my heart beating, and my eyes blinking, and the veins of a leaf. I can taste: the hot chili on my tongue, the crunch of crispy fries, and the smoothness of yogurt, the acidity of freshly sliced grapefruit, and the sweetness of honey.

Today I give thanks for my eyes, for my nose, my ears, my touch, my tongue, my understanding to recognize the good in the world and the goodness of God. Today I give thanks for my family and friends, my faith and my flag.

Today, I say, “Lord, you have given me so much. Give me just one more thing, A GRATEFUL HEART “! This is a beautiful thought, thank you Neil, for the beautiful words that communicate a message so clearly.

There is one, or rather, two words so simple, but when they come from the heart they become

magical and transformative: they are: THANK YOU ... THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

There is no other feeling nobler than gratitude. Sometimes we forget to say these words with a smile: thank you, thank you very-much ... to those who prepared our food, to those who make our clothes, to those that let us go in front of them, to those who share their companionship with us, and to those that love us and perhaps even criticize or correct us precisely because they love us. No one knows better than Mothers about love and giving thanks.

One woman, Gloria Molina, thanked God in the following way:

“Oh God, I thank you, for my son who does not clean his room, but instead watches TV, because it means that he is at home and not out on the streets. For the deductions on my paycheck for it means that I have a job. Because of the mess that I have to clean up after a party, because it means that I was surrounded by loved ones. For the clothes that are too tight for me because it means I have enough to eat. For my shadow that sees me working -because it means that I can go out in the sun. For the grass that I have to cut, windows that must be cleaned, bathrooms that also need cleaning, for this means I have a home. For the complaints I hear about the government, because it means we have freedom of expression. By

the spot to park my vehicle that I find at the end of the parking lot, because - it means I have a car. For the lady who sits behind me in church who is somewhat musically challenged when-she sings, because it means that I can hear. For the amount of clothes, I have to wash and iron, because it means I have clothes to wear. For the fatigue and the muscular pains at the end of the day-which tell me I was able to work hard. For the alarm clock which goes off early every morning, because it means I’m alive. And finally for the number of messages on my cell phone and in my Email that I receive, because that means I have friends who think about me.” When you think that everything in your life is going wrong, read this again “...

We all have so much to thank God for! Just a few examples: If you woke up this morning feeling more wellness than illness ... you are more blessed than many who did not wake up at all...If you have a place to live, eat and sleep, and If you have a job for which you earn a salary and if you have money in the bank or in your wallet, you are truly blessed. If you have not experienced fear of this Covid 19 virus pandemic, loneliness from the confinement in your house, or the fear and pain of dying in solitude, you are very blessed. If your parents are still alive and still married, you should be very grateful.

If you have the necessary technical services at home and you can listen to Sunday Mass from your home, you should be very grateful. If you have been able to be generous and charitable in the midst of this pandemic, give thanks to God who has blessed you with the privilege and means to share with others ...

To give thanks properly, two conditions are necessary: To recognize that nothing is owed to us, that we are not always deserving of what we are given. Before the Lord the debt of gratitude is immense. Everything is a gift from Him. -Starting with life, your first gift. And ending with the grace He has infused in our souls. That is the greatest gift that God can give us. He makes us his children and capable of superhuman, divine happiness. We can never thank Him enough.

Saint Paul asks us: What do you have that you have not received (1 Corinthians 4,7)? The more one thinks they have, the more indebted they should feel. And all the more reason to be grateful. We owe much to many. How many people have helped us throughout life! Thousands of people have lent their voice to God, and their hands and their hearts to make it possible for His paternal love to come to us. We all have many reasons to spend our lives giving thanks. Gratitude is a virtue. How grateful am I? Many times with our God Lord, we think that we

are doing Him favors and that He should be grateful to us. We have a conscience of being benefactors, instead of having the conscience of debtors. The reality is different. He owes us nothing. We owe Him everything. Everything that is ours before God is a debt. And it is useless to try to pay it back: God does not send us invoices. The only thing we have left is to thank Him constantly and for everything.

A man was assaulted by thieves who robbed him They stole his wallet and his cell phone. He prayed to God like this: “Lord, help me to be thankful; first because I had never been robbed before; second because even though they took my wallet, they did not take my life; third, because although they took everything I had, it was not a lot; and fourth, because it was I who was robbed and not the one who robbed. “

in the midst of this pandemic we have comforted and helped others. These are very difficult times, many have known people, friends who have been infected and some have died. Let us thank God that we are still alive and that we can continue to help others, so that with His help and our help, we can get ahead of this pandemic and we can learn to appreciate and thank all that God and our neighbors have done for us. And for reading this column ... thank you ... thank you very much!




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