

THE

# RIO GRANDE CATHOLIC

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## Diocese Chooses Safety Over Income

By Fernie Ceniceros  
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

The Most Reverend Mark Seitz has discerned that, due to increasing hospitalizations in El Paso, the time is not yet right for relaxation of the restrictions upon church gatherings.

In a letter dated April 28, Bishop Seitz explains the upward trend of coronavirus cases in El Paso is what has led to his decision to continue with the public closure of the celebration of Masses.

Bishop Seitz expressed his concern over the difficulty of not being able to celebrate Mass with the physical presence of the entire community.

"The Church also feels a great responsibility to set an example for the rest of our community," Bishop Seitz said. "Opening our churches would convey at this point a false sense of security about the risks of public gatherings here in El Paso. Many of our most fervent members are also people in the categories of highest risk — our senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions," he added.

Bishop Seitz expressed that priests will be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation by appointment. He also indicated that priests are working with local hospitals so that they can be available to deliver last rites.

"Priests will still be available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation by appointment and for the last rites for those who are dying," he said. "Protocols are being finalized for hospital visits under these circumstances," he added.

Bishop Seitz continues in his letter to encourage the faithful of the diocese of pray to an end of the coronavirus pandemic so that the faithful can return to full communion with Jesus during the public celebration of Masses.

"It is our sincere hope that within weeks the prevalence of the virus in our community will be at such a level that will permit an opening of our churches at least for smaller gatherings and private visits," he said. "In the meantime I would ask all the faithful of the Diocese of El Paso to continue to be united in prayer," he ended.

To keep up with the latest news from the Diocese of El Paso, you can download the MyParish app by texting the word app to 88202. You can also follow the Diocese of El Paso on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for the latest from the diocese.



Bishop Mark Seitz, Bishop of the Diocese of El Paso has mandated that the in-person celebration of Masses will continue to be closed to the public. Bishop Seitz stated that all Masses will continue to be live stream for the time being. *Photo by Fernie Ceniceros.*

## La Diócesis Elige la Seguridad por Delante de los Ingresos

Por Fernie Ceniceros  
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

El Reverendísimo Mark Seitz ha discernido que debido al aumento de las hospitalizaciones en El Paso, no es el momento adecuado para relajar las restricciones sobre las reuniones de la iglesia.

En una carta fechada el 28 de abril, el obispo Seitz explica que la tendencia al alza de los casos de coronavirus en El Paso es lo que ha llevado a su decisión de continuar con el cierre público de la celebración de misas.

El obispo Seitz expresó su preocupación por la dificultad de no poder celebrar la misa

con la presión física de toda la comunidad.

"La Iglesia también siente una gran responsabilidad de dar ejemplo al resto de nuestra comunidad", dijo el obispo Seitz. "Abrir nuestras iglesias transmitiría en este momento una falsa sensación de seguridad sobre los riesgos de las reuniones públicas aquí en El Paso. Muchos de nuestros miembros más fervientes son también personas en las categorías de mayor riesgo, nuestros ancianos y aquellos con condiciones de salud subyacentes", añadió.

El obispo Seitz expresó que los sacerdotes estarán disponibles para el Sacramento de la Reconciliación con cita

previa. También indicó que los sacerdotes están trabajando con los hospitales locales para que puedan estar disponibles para dar los últimos ritos.

"Los sacerdotes seguirán estando disponibles para el Sacramento de la Reconciliación con cita previa y para los últimos ritos para los que están muriendo", dijo. "Se están ultimando los protocolos para las visitas al hospital en estas circunstancias", añadió.

El obispo Seitz continúa en su carta animando a los fieles de la diócesis de rezar por el fin de la pandemia del coronavirus para que los fieles puedan volver a la plena comunión con Jesús durante la celebración pública

de las misas.

"Es nuestra sincera esperanza que dentro de unas semanas la prevalencia del virus en nuestra comunidad esté a tal nivel que permita la apertura de nuestras iglesias al menos para reuniones más pequeñas y visitas privadas", dijo. "Mientras tanto, pido a todos los fieles de la Diócesis de El Paso que sigan unidos en la oración", concluyó.

Para estar al día con las últimas noticias de la Diócesis de El Paso, pueden descargar la aplicación MyParish enviando la palabra app al 88202. También puedes seguir a la Diócesis de El Paso en Facebook, Twitter e Instagram para conocer las últimas noticias de la Diócesis.

## EDITOR'S COLUMN

# I Need a Haircut

I don't know about you, but I need a haircut. I know whenever I find myself thinking about whatever it is that this pandemic is not allowing me to do, I try and find something that this pandemic has shown me. So while I may want to sit here and write to you about what we are not able to do at this time. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you what valuable lessons I have learned throughout our time in the shelter in place.

Firstly let me start by sharing the most pertinent lesson I have learned during this time. Families and extended families are the most valuable and essential. That may seem like a no brainer lesson, but I do have to say that this pandemic has



**Fernie Ceniceros**

definitely made my need for my family much more necessary to me. I thank God daily that I still have most of my family intact. However, I will say that I don't think I understood how valuable it was before the pandemic, to be able to visit my Mom and Dad and my in-laws and to have my daughter to see her grandparents. Rest assured that I will forever

pray for those of us who are not blessed with family nearby.

While I am on the subject of family, the other lesson I have learned is that true friendship is something to be cherished and nurtured. I cannot tell you how valuable my friendships have been to me. Even though I can't see all of my friends in person. I have been able to keep in touch with them through the means available to me with the internet. I will forever pray for those of us who do not have friends nearby or cannot see their friends for whatever reason.

Like Bishop Mark mentions in his article, We are a Eucharistic people, we cannot live without the Sunday Mass. While I have been one of the very blessed to be able to be physically present

at Mass during our recordings of them. It is not at all lost on me that the celebration of Mass is something not only to be cherished, but it is also essential to who we are as a community. Please know that I have been praying for all of our faithful during this time of the pandemic. Moving forward, I will forever pray for those who cannot attend Mass. While I am here in our Diocese, I will work to help those of us that cannot go to Mass.

Another lesson I have learned is that my ability to be able to eat when I would like is an incredible blessing I should have always valued in my daily life. I recently had the opportunity of visiting the warehouse for El Pasoans Fighting Hunger. During

my time there, I was astonished to learn that there are a lot of El Pasoans literally fighting hunger daily here on the borderland. I will forever pray for those of us who go to bed hungry. For the rest of my life, I hope never to take for granted my ability to feed myself and my family.

All of the lessons above have helped to reshape my prayers for the rest of my life. I think, above all else, these lessons have taught me that I am incredibly blessed. These lessons have taught me that God is a constant presence in my life, and His presence is one that I know as a sinner I do not deserve. For the rest of my life, I will pray and work hard for those who do not have. I hope to continue to be of service to the community.

## Necesito Un Corte de Pelo

No sé ustedes, pero yo necesito un corte de pelo. Sé que cada vez que me encuentro pensando en lo que sea que esta pandemia no me permite hacer, trato de encontrar algo que esta pandemia me haya mostrado. Así que aunque quiera sentarme aquí y escribirte sobre lo que no somos capaces de hacer en este momento. Me gustaría aprovechar esta oportunidad para compartir con ustedes las valiosas lecciones que he aprendido a lo largo de nuestro tiempo en el refugio en el lugar.

En primer lugar, permítanme comenzar compartiendo la lección más pertinente que he aprendido durante este tiempo. Las familias y las familias extendidas son las más valiosas

y esenciales. Eso puede parecer una lección sin sentido, pero tengo que decir que esta pandemia definitivamente ha hecho que la necesidad de mi familia sea mucho más necesaria para mí. Agradezco a Dios diariamente que todavía tengo a la mayor parte de mi familia intacta. Sin embargo, diré que no creo haber entendido lo valioso que era, antes de la pandemia, poder visitar a mi mamá y papá y a mis suegros y tener a mi hija para ver a sus abuelos. Tengan la seguridad de que rezaré por siempre por aquellos que no tenemos familia cerca.

Mientras estoy en el tema de la familia, la otra lección que he aprendido es que la verdadera amistad es algo que debe ser apreciado y nutrido. No puedo

decirles lo valiosas que han sido mis amistades para mí. Aunque no puedo ver a todos mis amigos en persona. He podido mantenerme en contacto con ellos a través de los medios disponibles en Internet. Rezaré por siempre por aquellos de nosotros que no tenemos amigos cerca o no podemos ver a sus amigos por cualquier razón.

Como el obispo Mark menciona en su artículo, somos un pueblo eucarístico, no podemos vivir sin la misa del domingo. Aunque he sido uno de los muy bendecidos por poder estar físicamente presente en la misa durante nuestras grabaciones. No se me escapa que la celebración de la misa no sólo es algo que debe ser apreciado, sino que también es esencial

para lo que somos como comunidad. Por favor, sepan que he estado rezando por todos nuestros fieles durante este tiempo de la pandemia. Siguiendo adelante, siempre rezaré por aquellos que no pueden asistir a la misa. Mientras esté aquí en nuestra Diócesis, trabajaré para ayudar a aquellos que no pueden ir a misa.

Otra lección que he aprendido es que mi capacidad de poder comer cuando quiera es una increíble bendición que debería haber valorado siempre en mi vida diaria. Recientemente tuve la oportunidad de visitar el almacén de El Pasoans Fighting Hunger. Durante el tiempo que estuve allí, me sorprendió saber que hay muchos habitantes de El Paso que literalmente luchan

contra el hambre a diario aquí en la frontera. Rezaré por siempre por aquellos de nosotros que nos vamos a la cama con hambre. Por el resto de mi vida, espero nunca dar por sentada mi capacidad de alimentarme a mí y a mi familia.

Todas las lecciones anteriores han ayudado a reformular mis oraciones para el resto de mi vida. Creo que, por encima de todo, estas lecciones me han enseñado que estoy increíblemente bendecido. Estas lecciones me han enseñado que Dios es una presencia constante en mi vida, y su presencia es una que sé que como pecador no merezco. Por el resto de mi vida, rezaré y trabajaré duro por aquellos que no tienen. Espero continuar sirviendo a la comunidad.

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## INSEITZ INTO THE FAITH

# Without the Sunday Eucharist We Cannot Survive

One of my favorite stories of the Easter Season is the account of the disciples who set out on the night of that first Easter Sunday for the small town of Emmaus about a seven mile journey from Jerusalem. As they walked along speaking about the events of recent days they were joined by a third companion who entered the conversation and soon began to unfold for them the meaning of all they had experienced.

When the disciples arrived at an inn for the night they imposed upon the stranger to join them for a meal. They sat down and the stranger took the bread, said a prayer of blessing, broke it and gave it to them. At the meal the Word they had heard became the Bread they received. Immediately their eyes were opened and they recognized that the stranger who had joined them was none other than the Risen Jesus himself. Without realizing it, even as they had travelled on, they participated in the second Mass after the Last Supper itself. The pattern of hearing the Word and then sharing the bread, that has become Christ's Body and the wine that has become Christ's Blood has provided the basic structure of the Mass since the very beginning.

We could take it a step further and say that this pattern for us

Catholic Christians provides not only the structure of the Sacrifice and Meal that gives us life, but it is the pattern of our life itself. The entire life of a Christian is a journey in which we reflect on the Word of God, which became Incarnate in Jesus and we are nourished by him. The Mass, in other words, is not simply something we do, the Mass is our very life! The Eucharist sums up the meaning of our lives.

I always like to tell the story of a group of martyrs from North Africa. When the Emperor Diocletian put out an edict in the year 304 calling for the death of anyone who persisted in the practice of their Faith as Christians a group of 49 continued to gather for Mass in a town called Abitina. One Sunday they were arrested and brought before the representative of the Emperor. The only thing they were asked was to cease celebrating the Eucharist. The answer they gave was that they could not do this. When the interrogator asked them why, their response was this: "Sine Dominico (esse) non possumus. Intermitti Dominicum non potest." In other words, "Without the Sunday Eucharist we cannot survive."

Perhaps there are many of you who, after these weeks now without the opportunity to participate in the Mass and receive

Holy Communion, understand the words of these holy martyrs more fully. It is true! For us Catholic Christians to live long term without the Sunday Eucharist is inconceivable.

There have always been situations that have required people to live for a time without regular participation in the Mass. When we are sick often we are unable to go to Mass. In fact, if we are contagious we ought not attend. Those who live in a place with insufficient priests have had no choice but to go long periods of time without being able to attend Mass. I have visited places like that. You can even find such places in Mexico today. If it has not been your personal experience there are many in our community who have heard the stories from previous generations.

At this moment we are living in another situation in which we have found it necessary to close our churches and most of us have not been able to participate in the Sacraments. Here in the United States it has always been so easy to find a church nearby. Although we don't have enough priests, generally people in this country can easily find a Mass. We may have even taken this opportunity for granted. We may have thought of the opportunity to walk so closely with Jesus as



Bishop Mark J. Seitz

a burden rather than the amazing honor that it is to listen to the Risen Jesus as his Word is proclaimed and to share the same food as he gave his Apostles at the Last Supper when he said, "This is my body" and "This is my blood."

Understand that we are not closing our churches because the state has ordered it. Just as for the Martyrs of Abitina this right is too precious to make subject to the mandate of the state. We will always stand up for our First Amendment rights to religious liberty. But in this case the purpose of the state and the church coincide. We in the Church are supporting the efforts of the state to forestall this deadly virus. For a time, which thank God is temporary, we are sacrificing one of the most fundamental aspects of our life in the Church—that which is the very pattern of our journey through life.

In this moment of insight into all the Eucharist means to us perhaps we can understand better than we ever have what the Martyrs of Abitina were saying. Sadly, there are still those out there, perhaps some members of our families, who have never experienced the joy of those disciples on the road to Emmaus. They never did recognize that it was the Lord walking alongside them. Sometimes in life we only appreciate what we have had when it is taken from us. Maybe God will use this difficult time we are passing through to deepen our hunger for this life-giving Companion.

Let us pray that very soon we will gather with a joy that we can hardly contain to celebrate the Eucharist together once again along the journey of life.

## Sin la Eucaristía dominical no podremos sobrevivir

Una de mis historias favoritas de la temporada de Pascua es el relato de los discípulos que salieron en la noche de ese primer domingo de Pascua para el pequeño pueblo de Emaús a unos siete kilómetros de Jerusalén. Mientras caminaban hablando de los eventos de los últimos días se les unió un tercer compañero que entró en la conversación y pronto comenzó a desplegar para ellos el significado de todo lo que habían experimentado.

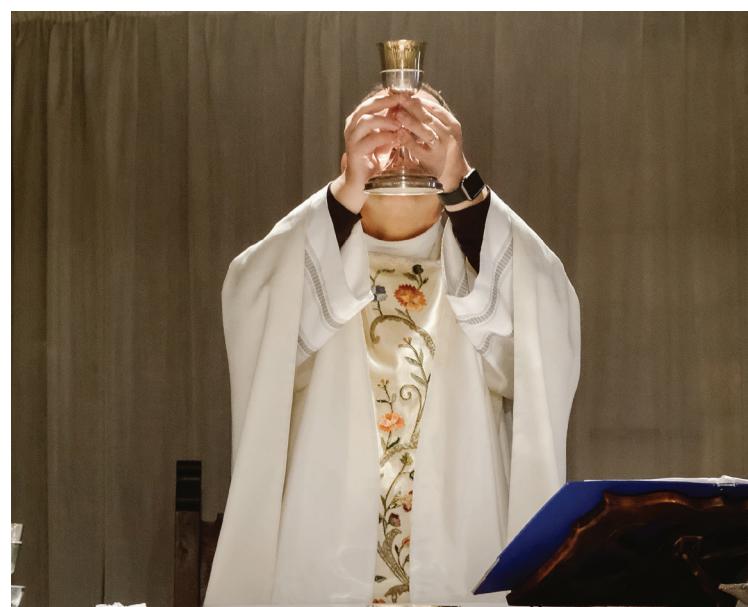
Cuando los discípulos llegaron a una posada para pasar la noche, le impusieron al extraño que se uniera a ellos para comer. Se sentaron y el desconocido tomó el pan, dijo una oración de bendición, lo partió y se lo dio. En la comida, la palabra que habían escuchado se convirtió en el pan que recibieron. Inmediatamente se les abrieron los ojos y reconocieron que el extraño que se había unido a ellos no era otro que el propio Jesús Resucitado. Sin darse cuenta, incluso mientras viajaban, participaron en la segunda misa después de la última cena. El patrón de escuchar la Palabra y luego compartir el pan, que se ha convertido en el Cuerpo de Cristo y el vino que se ha convertido en la Sangre de Cristo ha proporcionado la estructura básica de la Misa desde el principio.

Podríamos dar un paso más y decir que este patrón para nosotros los cristianos católicos

proporciona no sólo la estructura del Sacrificio y la Comida que nos da vida, sino que es el patrón de nuestra vida misma. La vida entera de un cristiano es un viaje en el que reflexionamos sobre la Palabra de Dios, que se encarnó en Jesús y nos alimentamos de él. La misa, en otras palabras, no es simplemente algo que hacemos, ¡la misa es nuestra propia vida! La Eucaristía resume el significado de nuestras vidas.

Siempre me gusta contar la historia de un grupo de mártires del norte de África. Cuando el emperador Diocleciano emitió un edicto en el año 304 pidiendo la muerte de cualquiera que persistiera en la práctica de su fe como cristianos un grupo de 49 continuaron reuniéndose para la misa en un pueblo llamado Abitina. Un domingo fueron arrestados y llevados ante el representante del Emperador. Lo único que se les pidió fue que dejaran de celebrar la Eucaristía. La respuesta que dieron fue que no podían hacerlo. Cuando el interrogador les preguntó por qué, su respuesta fue esta: "Sine Dominico (esse) non possumus. Intermitti Dominicum non potest." En otras palabras, "Sin la Eucaristía dominical no podemos sobrevivir".

Tal vez haya muchos de ustedes que, después de estas semanas sin la oportunidad de participar en la Misa y recibir la Sagrada Comunión, entiendan mejor las palabras de estos santos mártires. ¡Es verdad! Para no



sotros los cristianos católicos es inconcebible vivir mucho tiempo sin la Eucaristía dominical.

Siempre ha habido situaciones que han requerido que la gente viva por un tiempo sin la participación regular en la Misa. Cuando estamos enfermos, a menudo no podemos ir a misa. De hecho, si somos contagiosos no debemos asistir. Aquellos que viven en un lugar con pocos sacerdotes no han tenido más remedio que pasar largos períodos de tiempo sin poder asistir a la misa. He visitado lugares así. Incluso hoy en día se pueden encontrar lugares así en México. Si no ha sido su experiencia personal, hay muchos en nuestra comunidad que han escuchado las historias

de las generaciones anteriores.

En este momento estamos viviendo otra situación en la que hemos tenido que cerrar nuestras iglesias y la mayoría de nosotros no ha podido participar en los sacramentos. Aquí en los Estados Unidos siempre ha sido muy fácil encontrar una iglesia cercana. Aunque no tenemos suficientes sacerdotes, generalmente la gente en este país puede encontrar fácilmente una misa. Puede que incluso hayamos dado por sentada esta oportunidad. Puede que hayamos pensado en la oportunidad de caminar tan cerca de Jesús como una carga en lugar del asombroso honor que es escuchar a Jesús Resucitado mientras se proclama su Palabra

y compartir la misma comida que dio a sus Apóstoles en la Última Cena cuando dijo, "Este es mi cuerpo" y "Esta es mi sangre".

Entienda que no cerramos nuestras iglesias porque el Estado lo haya ordenado. Así como para los mártires de Abitina este derecho es demasiado precioso para someterlo al mandato del Estado. Siempre defenderemos nuestros derechos a la libertad religiosa de la Primera Enmienda. Pero en este caso el propósito del estado y la iglesia coinciden. Nosotros en la Iglesia apoyamos los esfuerzos del estado para prevenir este virus mortal. Por un tiempo, que gracias a Dios es temporal, estamos sacrificando uno de los aspectos más fundamentales de nuestra vida en la Iglesia - que es el mismo patrón de nuestro viaje a través de la vida.

En este momento de comprensión de todos los medios de la Eucaristía para nosotros tal vez podamos entender mejor que nunca lo que los mártires de Abitina estaban diciendo. Tristemente, todavía hay algunos, tal vez algunos miembros de nuestras familias, que nunca han experimentado la alegría de esos discípulos en el camino a Emaús. Nunca reconocieron que era el Señor quien caminaba a su lado. A veces en la vida sólo apreciamos lo que hemos tenido cuando nos lo quitan. Tal vez Dios.

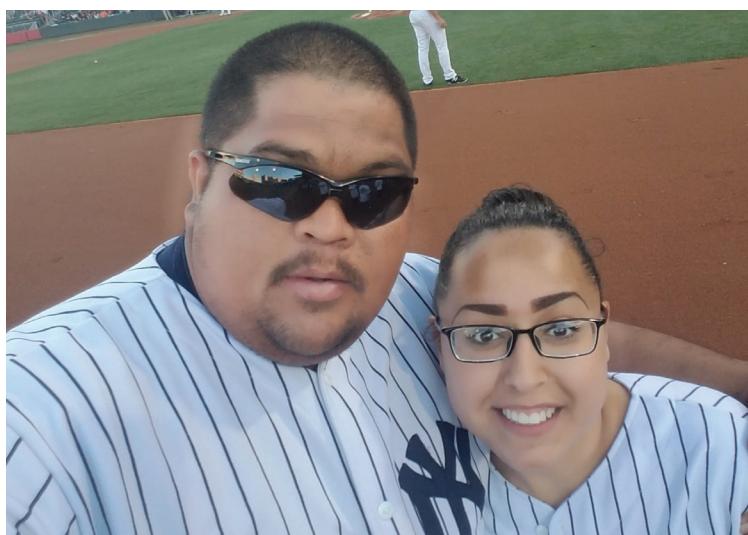
# Memo Garcia Passes after 9 month struggle after August 3rd Tragedy

By Fernie Ceniceros  
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

On Saturday, April 25th, Guillermo "Memo" Garcia was the final victim to die from the tragedy of August 3rd, almost nine months following the shooting rampage which has now claimed the lives of 23 people.

Bishop Mark Seitz said it was who Garcia was during his life that made him a special person.

"He was a man who was dedicated to his family and was always willing to dedicate time to his daughter and her soccer team," Bishop Seitz said. "It takes a special kind of guy to be willing to do that. I had the



Guillermo "Memo" Garcia was the final victim to die from the tragedy of August 3rd on Saturday, April 25th. *Photo Courtesy of the Garcia Family.*

opportunity to meet with his wife Jessica and his mother who were strong and dedicated examples of faith," he added.

Del Sol Medical Center CEO David Shrimp released a statement on Sunday afternoon to express the sadness hospital community at the loss of Garcia.

"After a nearly nine-month fight, our hearts are heavy as we report Guillermo "Memo" Garcia, our last remaining patient being treated from the El Paso shooting, has passed away," Shimp shared via email. "His courage, his strength and his story have touched many lives, including those of our caregivers, who tirelessly fought with him

and for him every step of the way. We are grieving with his family and with our community," he ended.

Bishop Seitz added that Memo and his wife Jessica were the first of the victims families to receive the rosaries blessed for them by Pope Francis.

"They were the first two victims that I had the great honor of hand delivering their rosaries from the Holy Father," Bishop Seitz said. "Jessica was also a recipient since she was also shot during the massacre, and being able to deliver those rosaries to them was truly my honor," Bishop Seitz said.

## Memo García Falleció Después De 9 Meses de la Tragedia del 3 de Agosto

Por Fernie Ceniceros  
Editor, Rio Grande Catholic

El sábado 25 de abril, Guillermo "Memo" García fue la última víctima en morir de la tragedia del 3 de agosto, casi nueve meses después del tiroteo que ahora ha cobrado la vida de 23 personas.

El obispo Mark Seitz dijo que fue lo que García fue durante su vida lo que lo hizo una persona especial.

"Era un hombre dedicado a su familia y siempre estaba dispuesto a dedicar su tiempo a su hija y a su equipo de fútbol", dijo el obispo Seitz.



"Se necesita un tipo especial de hombre para estar dispuesto a hacer eso. Tuve la oportunidad de conocer a su esposa Jessica

y a su madre, quienes fueron fuertes y dedicados ejemplos de fe", agregó.

El director general del Centro

Médico Del Sol, David Shrimp, emitió un comunicado el domingo por la tarde para expresar la tristeza de la comunidad hospitalaria por la pérdida de García.

"Después de una lucha de casi nueve meses, nuestros corazones están pesados ya que informamos que Guillermo "Memo" García, nuestro último paciente que queda siendo tratado del tiroteo de El Paso, ha fallecido", compartió Shimp a través de un correo electrónico. "Su coraje, su fuerza y su historia han tocado muchas vidas, incluyendo las de nuestros cuidadores, que lucharon incansablemente con él y por él en

cada paso del camino. Estamos de duelo con su familia y con nuestra comunidad", concluyó.

El obispo Seitz añadió que Memo y su esposa Jessica fueron las primeras familias de las víctimas en recibir los rosarios bendecidos para ellas por el Papa Francisco.

"Fueron las dos primeras víctimas a las que tuve el gran honor de entregar en mano sus rosarios del Santo Padre", dijo el obispo Seitz. "Jessica también fue una receptora ya que también fue baleada durante la masacre, y poder entregarles esos rosarios fue realmente mi honor", dijo el obispo Seitz.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FATHER!

Msgr. Victor Kayrouz (Extern)  
Fr. Nam Kim (Extern)  
Fr. Jose DelaCruz Longoria, MNM  
Fr. Flavio Alberto Hernandez, OFM  
Fr. Miguel Alcuino  
Fr. Jose Alfredo Ramirez, OFM  
Fr. Miguel Perez  
Msgr. Arturo Bañuelas  
Fr. Sergio (Roberto) Hernandez, OFM  
Fr. James Coindreau  
Fr. John Paul Madanu, (Extern)  
Fr. Sam Rosales, SJ  
Fr. Ralph Solis Jr.  
Fr. Antonio Mena  
Fr. Tobias M. Macias, OSM

## ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES

Fr. Mateus Pol, OSM	May 3, 2018
Fr. Miguel Alcuino	May 4, 1979
Fr. Federico Franco, OSM	May 4, 1989
Fr. Hector Chicas (OP)	May 11, 1996
Fr. Fulgencio Mayorga (Extern)	May 16, 1998
Bishop Mark J. Seitz	May 17, 1980
Fr. Miguel Briseno, OFM Conv.	May 19, 1990
Fr. Kevin O'Neill, FSSP	May 19, 2012
Fr. Donald J. Adamski, OFM Conv	May 24, 1975
Fr. Michael Lewis	May 24, 2019
Fr. Miguel Perez	May 24, 2019
Fr. Edward Paul Roden-Lucero	May 25, 1982

## ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES CONT'D

5/1	Fr. William Morton, SSC	May 25, 1985
5/2	Fr. Edward Carpenter, Jr.	May 25, 1995
5/3	Fr. Jose De la Cruz Longoria, MNM	May 26, 1996
5/7	Fr. Matthew Robert Vierno, FSSP	May 26, 2016
5/8	Fr. Cong Chi Vo	May 26, 2017
5/10	Fr. Francisco Hernandez	May 27, 2016
5/11	Fr. Benjamin Flores-Ruiz	May 29, 1993
5/12	Fr. Frank R. Lopez	May 29, 1993
5/13	Fr. Ralph Solis Jr.	May 29, 1993
5/16		
5/16		
5/19		
5/21		
5/24		
5/28		

## ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES (RETIRED)

Fr. Richard Waiwood	May 12, 1973
Fr. Stephen Peters	May 25, 1967
Fr. James Hall	May 29, 1970



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# We are a Eucharistic People - A Eucharistic Church

**By Fr. Nile Gross, STL**  
Special to the Rio Grande Catholic

We are a Eucharistic people – a Eucharistic Church. The Eucharist, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the center of our faith and, by extension, our lives. What, then, are we to do, to feel, in the current crisis in which access to the Body and Blood of Christ is limited?

The most important thing that we must do is pray – pray for the mercy of God, for His healing, for His strength in these times. We must also consider what it means to be a Eucharistic people, because this manner of defining ourselves is not limited to being a people who receives the Eucharist at Mass. It is the fuller reality which should be focused on in these times of crisis. For many centuries the People of God did not receive the Eucharist, were not even offered it, but twice a year, and yet, we were still a Eucharistic people. Thanks to the leadership of Pope St. Pius X, who asked that the Eucharistic Lord be offered to the laity at every Mass in his 1910 encyclical, *Quam singulari*, Catholics around the world gained greater access to this beloved gift of the Church. Never would the Church want to return to the days in which the people did not receive the Eucharist frequently.

However, we must remember that many great saints lived and

thrived prior to 1910. These men and women recognized the Eucharistic presence in the bread and wine, but understood other dimensions of this great Mystery as well. The word eucharist itself gives a hint to this deeper meaning – “to give thanks”. A Eucharistic people comes together in liturgy not simply to receive something, but to bring something to the celebration as well. To bring to God our sacrifice of praise, our thanksgiving to Him for all the blessings he has bestowed upon us. To be a Eucharistic people means to draw on the Holy Spirit dwelling within us and actively join ourselves, our prayers, with those of Jesus Christ to the Father, as we are members of his Mystical Body. We must remember the sacrificial element of the Mass and our proper role in this sacrament. By joining ourselves to the liturgical prayer, we connect ourselves to the Cross, to the sacrifice of Calvary.

In the present crisis something has been taken from us – direct access to the Eucharist in the Body and Blood of Christ. However, we can still offer ourselves to the Father with Christ, as St. Paul says: “I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but

be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2). In all that we do, especially in times of crisis and suffering, we must present ourselves as “living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” This is the fullness of the meaning of being a Eucharistic people. We live a sacrificial life, giving ourselves to others as Christ did for us on the Cross.

Now, this does not alleviate the true pain that we feel in the present moment when access to the Mass and the Precious Body and Blood of Christ is limited. But it should allow us to join more fully in the Eucharistic reality at the heart of the Church. We can continue to offer ourselves for our families, for those who are suffering. We pray for those affected by this terrible epidemic and for its conclusion. We follow the liturgies of the Church and the liturgical year as best we can – reading the daily readings and meditating on them, meditating on our rich Eucharistic prayers, watching televised or streamed masses. We bring the Eucharist, the thanksgiving, into our homes and families. Importantly, we make a spiritual communion. The Church has taught through the centuries that when a person is not able to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Mass,

we can still unite ourselves to Him in prayer. It is a beautiful way to express our desire for union with Him and with his Church. This act of spiritual communion was encouraged by many of the great saints of our past – Padre Pio, Alphonsus Liguori, and Josemaria Escrivá, to name a few, the latter who said, “What a source of grace there is in spiritual communion! Practice it frequently and you’ll have greater presence of God and closer union with him in all your actions.”

How does one make this act of communion? At the time of Communion in the Mass or immediately after, one would make a prayer expressing their desire to receive Christ and asking him to come into their hearts. St. Alphonsus Liguori provides a beautiful example of such a prayer of spiritual communion:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

This prayer is not a substitute for the Eucharistic Lord but can unite us to him throughout the day and demonstrate our love

for Christ and the Eucharist. If reception of communion is not possible for you in these times or at any time, because of sickness, age, distance, this prayer or a personal prayer which conveys the same love of Christ and desire to be with him may be offered. Jesus responds to prayer.

The Church has not abandoned anyone in these times of need. Our churches remain open. Priests are available for confessions and anointing of the sick and desire to bring God’s merciful love to all in need. Priests offer masses daily for the People of God and their needs. Because of the danger of viral infection, large gatherings may not be possible, which may limit access to Mass throughout the world, but the Church continues to beseech God for her people in her time of need.

We are a Eucharistic People. Let us never forget this. Let us extend the graces of the Eucharist into the world by uniting ourselves to the sacrifice of the Lord and offering ourselves for others in prayer and service just as Christ offered himself on the cross. Let us pray that the Eucharistic Lord will be returned to us soon. No greater gift has been given to us! He is the center of our lives. But let us live as a Eucharistic people, as saints seeking Christ in all things, an offering Him to others in our words and actions.

## Somos un Pueblo Eucarístico - Una Iglesia Eucarística

**Por Fr. Nile Gross, STL**  
Especial a el Rio Grande Catholic

Somos un pueblo eucarístico, una Iglesia eucarística. La Eucaristía, el Cuerpo y la Sangre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, es el centro de nuestra fe y, por extensión, de nuestras vidas. ¿Qué debemos hacer, sentir, en la crisis actual en la que el acceso al Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo está limitado?

Lo más importante que debemos hacer es rezar, rezar por la misericordia de Dios, por su curación, por su fuerza en estos tiempos. También debemos considerar lo que significa ser un pueblo eucarístico, porque esta forma de definirnos no se limita a ser un pueblo que recibe la Eucaristía en la Misa. Es la realidad más completa en la que debemos centrarnos en estos tiempos de crisis. Durante muchos siglos el Pueblo de Dios no recibió la Eucaristía, ni siquiera se le ofreció, sino dos veces al año, y aún así, seguimos siendo un pueblo eucarístico. Gracias al liderazgo del Papa San Pío X, quien pidió que el Señor de la Eucaristía fuera ofrecido a los laicos en cada misa en su encíclica de 1910, *Quam singulari*, los católicos de todo el mundo obtuvieron un mayor acceso a este amado regalo de la Iglesia. La Iglesia nunca quiso volver a los días en que el pueblo no recibía la Eucaristía con frecuencia.

Sin embargo, debemos recordar que muchos grandes

santos vivieron y prosperaron antes de 1910. Estos hombres y mujeres reconocieron la presencia de la Eucaristía en el pan y el vino, pero también comprendieron otras dimensiones de este gran Misterio. La palabra eucaristía en sí misma da una pista de este significado más profundo - “dar gracias”. Un pueblo eucarístico se reúne en la liturgia no sólo para recibir algo, sino también para aportar algo a la celebración. Para llevar a Dios nuestro sacrificio de alabanza, nuestra acción de gracias a Él por todas las bendiciones que nos ha concedido. Ser un pueblo eucarístico significa recurrir al Espíritu Santo que habita en nosotros y unirnos activamente, nuestras oraciones, con las de Jesucristo al Padre, ya que somos miembros de su Cuerpo Místico. Debemos recordar el elemento de sacrificio de la Misa y nuestro propio papel en este sacramento. Al unirnos a la oración litúrgica, nos conectamos a la Cruz, al sacrificio del Calvario.

En la presente crisis algo nos ha sido arrebatado: el acceso directo a la Eucaristía en el Cuerpo y la Sangre de Cristo. Sin embargo, todavía podemos ofrecernos al Padre con Cristo, como dice San Pablo: “Os pido, pues, hermanos, por la misericordia de Dios, que presentéis vuestros cuerpos como sacrificio vivo, santo y agradable a Dios, que es vuestro culto espiritual”. No os conforméis a este mundo, sino transformaos por medio de

la renovación de vuestro entendimiento, para que comprobéis cuál es la voluntad de Dios, lo que es bueno, aceptable y perfecto” (Romanos 12:1-2). En todo lo que hacemos, especialmente en tiempos de crisis y sufrimiento, debemos presentarnos como “sacrificios vivos, santos y aceptables para Dios”. Esta es la plenitud del significado de ser un pueblo eucarístico. Vivimos una vida de sacrificio, dándonos a los demás como Cristo lo hizo por nosotros en la Cruz.

Ahora bien, esto no alivia el verdadero dolor que sentimos en el momento actual, cuando el acceso a la Misa y al Precioso Cuerpo y Sangre de Cristo es limitado. Pero debería permitirnos unirnos más plenamente a la realidad eucarística en el corazón de la Iglesia. Podemos continuar ofreciéndonos por nuestras familias, por aquellos que están sufriendo. Rezamos por los afectados por esta terrible epidemia y por su conclusión. Seguimos las liturgias de la Iglesia y el año litúrgico lo mejor que podemos - leyendo las lecturas diarias y meditando en ellas, meditando nuestras ricas oraciones eucarísticas, viendo misas televisadas o en streaming.

Llevamos la Eucaristía, la acción de gracias, a nuestros hogares y familias. Y lo que es más importante, hacemos una comunión espiritual. La Iglesia ha enseñado a través de los siglos que cuando una persona no es capaz de recibir el Cuerpo y la Sangre de

Jesús en la Misa, todavía podemos unirnos a Él en la oración. Es una hermosa manera de expresar nuestro deseo de unión con Él y con su Iglesia. Este acto de comunión espiritual fue alentado por muchos de los grandes santos de nuestro pasado -Padre Pío, Alfonso de Ligorio y Josemaría Escrivá, por citar algunos, este último que dijo: “¡Qué fuente de gracia hay en la comunión espiritual! Practíquela con frecuencia y tendrá una mayor presencia de Dios y una unión más estrecha con él en todas sus acciones”.

¿Cómo se hace este acto de comunión? En el momento de la comunión en la misa o inmediatamente después, uno haría una oración expresando su deseo de recibir a Cristo y pidiéndole que entre en sus corazones. San Alfonso de Ligorio proporciona un bello ejemplo de tal oración de comunión espiritual:

Jesús mío, creo que estás presente en el Santísimo Sacramento. Te amo por encima de todas las cosas y deseo reciberte en mi alma. Ya que ahora no puedo reciberte sacramentalmente, ven al menos espiritualmente a mi corazón. Te abrazo como si ya estuvieras allí, y me uno totalmente a ti. Nunca permitas que me separe de ti. Amén.

Esta oración Esta oración no sustituye al Señor de la Eucaristía, sino que puede unirnos a él a lo largo del día y demostrar nuestro amor por Cristo y la Eucaristía. Si la recepción de la comunión no le es posible

en estos tiempos o en cualquier momento, debido a la enfermedad, la edad, la distancia, se puede ofrecer esta oración o una oración personal que transmite el mismo amor a Cristo y el deseo de estar con él. Jesús responde a la oración.

La Iglesia no ha abandonado a nadie en estos tiempos de necesidad. Nuestras iglesias permanecen abiertas. Los sacerdotes están disponibles para confesar y ungir a los enfermos y desean llevar el amor misericordioso de Dios a todos los necesitados. Los sacerdotes ofrecen misas diarias para el Pueblo de Dios y sus necesidades. Debido al peligro de infección viral, las grandes reuniones pueden no ser posibles, lo que puede limitar el acceso a la misa en todo el mundo, pero la Iglesia continúa suplicando a Dios por su pueblo en su momento de necesidad.

Somos un pueblo eucarístico. Nunca olvidemos esto. Extendamos las gracias de la Eucaristía al mundo uniéndonos al sacrificio del Señor y ofreciéndonos por los demás en la oración y el servicio, como Cristo se ofreció a sí mismo en la cruz. Oremos para que el Señor de la Eucaristía nos sea devuelto pronto. ¡No se nos ha dado un regalo más grande! Él es el centro de nuestras vidas. Pero vivamos como un pueblo eucarístico, como santos buscando a Cristo en todas las cosas, ofreciéndolo a los demás en nuestras palabras y acciones.

# Hope Lights a Mother's Heart



Janet M. Crowe

Quiet enfolds the home like a soft blanket holding the family in its warm embrace. Soft breathing emanates from every bedroom as the family sleeps and dreams.

A scream suddenly rips the blanket of silence, shattering the peaceful night. Without hesitation, the mother leaps out of bed and rushes to her child's room. No need to sit up and wonder about the sound, a mother knows her children's voices even in her sleep. In a heartbeat, she is cradling her child in her arms, pouring the love straight from her heart into him, hoping to cover him with her loving reassurance.

Nightmares may not be real threats, but the fear feels real to a child. Nightmares are not limited to our childhood years, and panic can seem just as real to an adult, especially when the nightmares are not in our dreams.

Our biggest fears often attack during the day as we worry about the future, especially during these uncertain times. People have lost their jobs. Companies have closed temporarily, maybe permanently. No paychecks mean savings accounts are being depleted in order to pay for the necessities of food and rent. How long will this last? What will we

do if it continues much longer?

Now, throw an unexpected pregnancy into the list of worries. Every pregnancy brings changes into a woman's and a family's life, whether the pregnancy is joyfully anticipated or unexpectedly jolts the very foundation of the woman's life. Imagine family members jumping up and down in excitement versus the ground trembling beneath a woman's feet as an earthquake-sized panic tears apart her future plans while adding to the struggles of the current uncertainty. What will she do? Who can she turn to for help?

Sadly, abortion has been legalized for over forty-seven years. Women of child-bearing age have never known a time when abortion was not a legal and socially acceptable solution for what has become known as a problem pregnancy. As a result, the more commonly known remedy is provided by those who offer a "quick and easy" solution, followed by lifelong pain and regret. Abortion fights against the body's natural protection systems as well as tearing a hole in the fiber of a woman's nature.

An interesting reality of womanhood becomes evident when a woman realizes she is pregnant. Maybe not immediately when the pregnancy test reveals a positive result because she is sometimes in a fog of confusion and denial. However, when the truth of her pregnancy hits home, a woman's initial reaction is to place her hand against her abdomen. She is not grabbing her stomach lest she become sick, although that can also be

a symptom. No, her womanly instinct, her natural act of motherly protection, automatically reaches to cradle and protect the life within her. God's design for motherhood is flawless.

Once a woman sees her preborn baby alive and moving on an ultrasound screen, she instinctively feels a rush of hope, sometimes mixed with fear and anxiety, but especially hope. Is my baby all right? How will I provide for him or her? What will I tell my parents or partner? Is that really my baby's tiny heart beating? Ribbons of hope and worry will always be looped together to form the bow that ties God's love to the natural temperament of motherhood, no matter how young or old our children are.

Hope is a fundamental part of motherhood. Hope is the flame that burns in a mother's heart. Hope for the child's health. Hope for a good future for him. Hope for a satisfying career for her. Hope that our children will be happy. Our children soon grow up, move away and build good lives of their own. But then the phone rings and a mother hears that tiny inflection in her child's voice. Worry invades her heart, but hope conquers every fear so that she is able to do whatever she needs to do to help her child. Hope keeps a mother going, nourishing her for whatever battle she must endure to protect her child.

However, what happens if the panic and the fear drive her to accept that abortion will end the problem which she is being manipulated into seeing her preg-



nancy to be? The flame of hope is being suffocated by the lies that she is not already a mother, that her baby is not already alive, moving, growing and developing according to God's plan.

Hope flickers and sputters within her heart, waiting for someone to breathe fresh air and love into her heart to show that she is also a child of God and that she is loved for who she is, not because she can be profitable for the abortion clinic. If she is offered true and loving assistance to remedy the underlying difficulties that have caused her to panic, she can recognize that the baby was never the real problem. She can then overcome whatever obstacles lie along the path to creating a good and happy life for both herself and her child.

Kindling that flame of hope in her heart illuminates the path she can now clearly see. But so often in uncertain times like today, it takes someone else to light the way for her so that she can distinguish between love and lies, between help and greed, between hope and despair. Which are we willing to offer to a woman and her preborn child? If she were our own daughter, would we nourish the flame of hope in her heart and assist her in becoming the strong woman we know her to be. Or would we extinguish her inner strength and convince her that she is too weak?

A flame of hope burns brightly in God's heart as well. He hopes that we choose to help a woman in need, to rescue a child in danger, and to light flames of love and hope in all our hearts.



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# Tiempo De Compasión



Padre Wilson Cuevas

La palabra COMPASIÓN ha desaparecido no solo de nuestro léxico sino sobre todo, de nuestro corazón. La resistencia a la compasión hay que entenderla como un síntoma. Los modelos en boga van en otra línea: éxito, bienestar, salud, competitividad... En el dolor ajeno intuimos un sufrimiento que puede llegar a ser nuestro y preferimos alienarnos de cualquier manera, mediante el fingimiento o la indiferencia. Olvidamos que nada tiene, en este mundo más sentido que la compasión. La compasión significa, sufrir con el otro, es una forma de sustraer el dolor a la soledad que genera, diciéndole a aquel al que nos acercamos: "No estás solo, porque conozco tu sufrimiento y tomo tu dolor, en parte, para mí". La compasión es esta particular relación humana que paradójicamente comienza ahí, cuando necesitamos que nos cuiden y somos correspondidos por una presencia amiga. El grito del que sufre nos llega con frecuencia sin palabras: el silencio indefenso lo dice todo,

la vida aún más desnuda que de costumbre, la mirada herida por la adversidad que en este tiempo de la Pandemia del COVID-19. La compasión suscita escucha, sintonía, responsabilidad por la vida, elección solidaria, gestos, permanencia.

En la compasión se produce una suspensión del juicio sobre la vulnerabilidad del otro. Se construye como consentimiento ofrecido al otro tal como se nos parece aquí y ahora. La compasión nos ancla en este instante en el que nos toca vivir. En la práctica de la compasión también se aprende a sufrir ayudando al otro. Sabemos que no podemos curar, pero que, tanto o más que cura, lo que importa es estar presentes. La verdadera espiritualidad cristiana debe ser una escuela de compasión. El judío Eli Wiesel cita unos hermosos preceptos claves:

El justo no puede limitarse al estudio del Talmud, del Zohar o de sus libros de oraciones. Debe abandonar esas tareas para ir al bosque a cortar leña a fin de encender fuego con que se calientan los pobres, acercándose así al cielo.

O este otro:  
Dios debe dirigir su mirada a las personas necesitadas, Y no a nosotros. Nuestra misión es acudir en su auxilio en nombre de Dios. A veces, incluso, en lugar de Dios!.

En la espiritualidad cristiana

hay mucha historia inolvidable, quisiera recordar con ustedes una narrada en las primeras biografías de San Francisco de Asís: Cierta día que paseaba a caballo por una llanura cerca de Asís, Francisco se cruzó inesperadamente con un leproso. Sintió un horror intenso, pero al recordar que había optado por una vida perfecta, y que por encima de todo debía vencerse así mismo si quería ser "soldado de Cristo" (2 Tim. 2,3), salto del caballo para abrazar al desdichado, este que extendía la mano pidiendo solo limosna, recibió, junto con el dinero un beso.

Para Jesús la COMPASIÓN, fue la preocupación PRINCIPAL: abastecer de aliento a los afligidos, incluir a los pobres, dar calma a los sufrientes, pan a los hambrientos y FE a todos como el nutriente más esencial. En la compasión de Jesús anida su mensaje más revolucionario para toda la humanidad. ¿Como recuperar la compasión en un teatro de tanto egocentrismo? Si es compadeciéndose en ayudar con actitud empática el dolor del próximo habrá que quitarse vendas y vendajes: ver y dejar de traficar "distraídamente" con la angustia, la violencia, los abusos en todos los órdenes, el menosprecio, la desigualdad provocada por los centros de poder.

Jesús, se sitúa del lado de los desesperanzados y de los oprimidos para rescatar a los

abandonados, a los perdedores, escucha sus clamores, sana a los enfermos, quita el hambre a los pobres, protege a los desamparados. No de manera moralista sino humanamente trascendente: con el único valor de la convivencia posible, el AMOR que nace de la toma de conciencia. Anestesiada por el consumismo y la explotación, la sociedad se autoengaña cuando cree que puede tapar injusticias y pobres. Despertar es la gran tarea: Despertar la conciencia, amar y escuchar la voz de Dios, propiciar la solidaridad humana, sumar si, como sinónimo de inclusión, no de acumular. Releamos a Mateo 25, 31-46 y el gran juicio aparece ante nosotros claramente. No seremos juzgados por la fe o la religión profesada sino por la conciencia de solidaridad hacia los sufrientes.

Tolerancia cero hacia la injusticia es la vía para el renacer de la compasión: "Hay algo muy hondo que cambiar en este mundo: la acumulación por la solidaridad con espíritu. Hoy lo necesario es centrar a la Iglesia y a la humanidad en la persona de Jesús y en su proyecto del Reino de Dios. No es posible el estado de bienestar tan ansiado sin la base que en la vida todos somos importantes! No basta la compasión y solidad en los momentos de crisis social, para derribar al gran tirado del presente: el mercado. Ahí todo

se comercia: la dignidad, las creencias, las tradiciones, la libertad, el amor...

Todos nos sentimos afligidos, preocupados y temerosos de lo que está pasando y de lo que podamos seguir viviendo. Ya queremos salir del encierro de nuestras casas, pero el temor persiste... Este es el tiempo para reflexionar y hacer propósitos de cambios en la actitud de vivir. Y ante la incertidumbre Dios nos consuela y fortalece. Así lo sentí la otra noche cuando en uno de mis libros me encontré con una tarjeta que me envió un amigo hace algún tiempo en la que me decía: "El mismo Padre eterno que cuida de ti ahora, te cuidara mañana y todos los días. Te ampara de sufrimiento y te dará la fuerza inagotable para vencerlo. Esta en paz y haz a un lado todos los pensamientos e imaginaciones de ansiedad; basta que digas con fe: Jesus ¡Yo Confío en ti!" Que, en este camino de la Pascua, el Señor Jesús nos ayude a convertirnos en una chispa de luz de fe y esperanza en un mundo libre de la Pandemia del Covid-19 y de todo mal, para que su LUZ DIVINA, ilumine la oscuridad que todavía llena al mundo de dolor y de muerte. "Y que, por tu dolorosa Pasión, ten misericordia de nosotros y del mundo entero" Animo! con la ayuda de Dios todo se puede!

# Time Of Compassion

The word COMPASSION has disappeared not only from our language but above all, from our hearts. Resistance to compassion must be understood as a symptom. The models in vogue go in another direction: success, well-being, health, competitiveness ... In the pain of others, we detect a suffering that can become ours and we prefer to alienate ourselves in any way, through pretense or indifference. We forget that nothing has more sense in this world than compassion. Compassion means suffering with another, it is a way of subtracting the pain from the loneliness that it generates, saying to the one to whom we approach: "You are not alone, because I know your suffering and I take your pain, your place ." Compassion is that particular human relationship that paradoxically begins there, when we need to be cared for and reciprocated by a friendly presence. The cry of the one who suffers often comes to us without words: the helpless silence says it all, life even more bare than usual, the gaze wounded by the adversity that at this time is the COVID-19 Pandemic. Compassion arouses listening, harmony, responsibility for life, solidarity choice, gestures, and permanence.

In compassion there is a suspension of judgment about the vulnerability of the other. It is constructed as consent offered to the other, as it seems to us here and now. Compassion anchors us in this moment in which we have to live. In the practice of compassion, you also learn to suffer by helping the other. We know that we cannot heal, but that, as much or more than curing, what matters is being present. True Christian spirituality must be a school of compassion. The Jewish man, Eli Wiesel, quotes some beautiful guidelines:

The righteous cannot limit himself to the study of the Talmud, the Zohar, or their books of prayers. He must abandon those tasks to go to the forest to cut wood to light a fire with which the poor may be warmed, thus approaching heaven.

Or this one:

God must direct His gaze to those in need, and not to us.

Our mission is to come to their aid. In the name of God.

Sometimes, even instead of God!

In Christian spirituality there is a lot of unforgettable history. I would like to recall with you a narrative in the first biographies of Saint Francis of Assisi: One day when he was riding

his horse on a plain near Assisi, Francisco de Cruz Inés suddenly came upon a leper. He felt an intense horror, but remembering that he had opted for a perfect life, and that above all, he had to overcome himself if he wanted to be "soldier of Christ" (2 Tim. 2,3), he jumped from the horse to embrace the unfortunate, the one who extended his hand asking only for alms, received, along with the money a kiss as well.. For Jesus, COMPASION was the MAIN concern: to provide encouragement to the afflicted, to include the poor, calm the suffering, feed the hungry and instill FAITH to all as the most essential nutrient.

In the compassion of Jesus rests his most revolutionary message for all humanity. How to recover compassion in a theater of such self-centeredness? If it is sympathizing to help others with empathy, you will have to take off bandages and dressings: look and see and stop going about "absent-mindedly" with anguish, at the violence, abuses of all kinds, contempt, inequality caused by the "powers that be".

Jesus, stands at the side of the hopeless and the oppressed to rescue the abandoned, the lost ones, hears their cries, heals the sick, takes away the hunger of the poor, and protects the

homeless. Not in a moralistic but in a humanly transcendent way: with the only value of possible coexistence, LOVE that is born from awareness. Anesthetized by consumerism and exploitation, society deceives itself when it believes that it can cover injustices and ignore the poor.

Awakening is the great task: Awakening conscience, loving and listening to the voice of God, promoting human solidarity, adding yes, as a synonym for inclusion, not accumulation. Let us reread Matthew 25, 31-46 and the great judgment appears before us clearly. We will not be judged by our faith or professed religion but by the conscience of solidarity towards the suffering.

Zero tolerance for injustice is the way to the rebirth of compassion: "There is something very deep that must change in this world: accumulation for solidarity with spirit. Today what is necessary is to center the Church and humanity in the person of Jesus and in his project for the Kingdom of God. The long-awaited welfare state is not possible without the basis that in life we are all important! Compassion and solitude in moments of social crisis are not enough to bring down the great pull of the present: the market. There everything is traded: dig-

nity, beliefs, traditions, freedom, love...

We all feel afflicted, worried and afraid by what is happening and how we may have to continue living. We want to leave the confinement of our homes, but the fear persists ... This is the time to reflect and make proposals for changes in the attitude of our lives. And in the face of uncertainty, God comforts and strengthens us. This is how I felt the other night when in one of my books I found a card that a friend sent me some time ago in which he said to me: "The same eternal Father who takes care of you now, will take care of you tomorrow and every day. He protects you from suffering and He will give you the inexhaustible strength to overcome it. Be at peace and put aside all thoughts and imaginations of anxiety, it is enough for me to say with faith: Jesus, I trust in you! "May the Lord Jesus help us this Easter to become a spark of light of faith and hope in a world free from the Covid-19 Pandemic and all evil, so that His DIVINE LIGHT may illuminate the darkness that still fills the world with pain and death. "And may He have mercy on us and on the whole world through His sorrowful Passion" (From the Chaplet of Divine Mercy).

# To the people of the El Paso Catholic Diocese

Sandra and I continue to pray for the health and welfare of each of you as we continue to face the ongoing Coronavirus spreading around the world. I would personally like to thank the priests and parishioners that have been a part of our travel family and have allowed us to be a part of their faith journeys.

The much anticipated Oberammergau Passion Play has been cancelled for 2020 and will be moving the production to 2022.

If it is God's will, we will soon be announcing the new itineraries and schedule in the next few months. The safety and well being of our pilgrims have and always will be our number one focus. May God continue to Bless you and your families, and may this unprecedented virus bring us closer together and strengthen our Catholic faith. God Bless you all.

Kerry & Sandra McCullough.

*Travel With Kerry*

**915-591-4246 - KERRY@TRAVELWK.COM**

*"The world is a book, and those who do not travel, read only one page".*

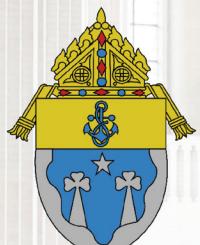
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