



TASH TIMES

Vol 06 – November / December 2019. Oaxaca, Mexico.

www.tashinc.org

■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends,

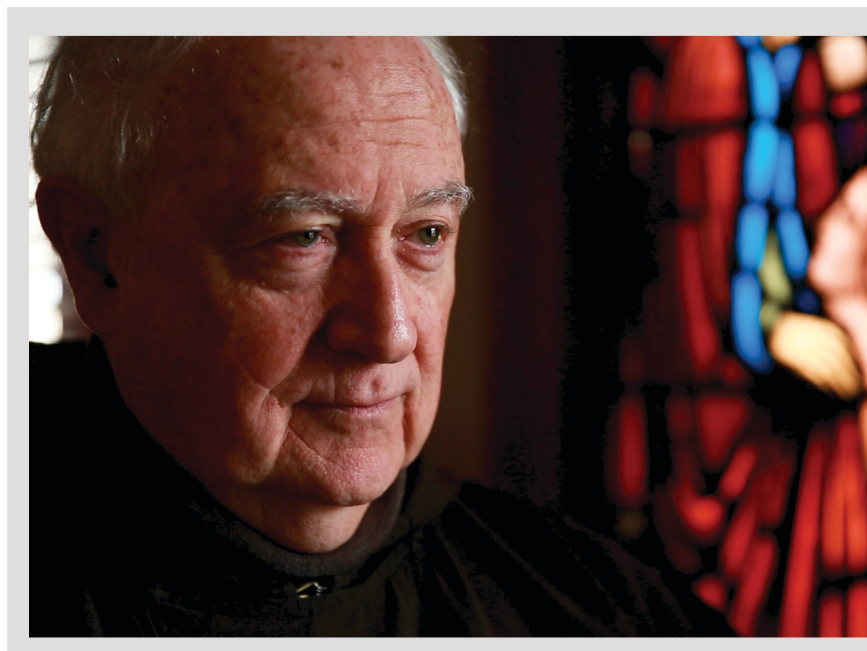
Recently, St. Teresa of Avila Parish in Pittsburgh held its annual autumn brunch to support our ministries in Oaxaca. I preached at all the weekend Masses to tell the parishioners about some of the wonderful things that have happened during the past year because of their generosity. Towards the end of my homily, I jokingly reminded them that there were less than two months until Christmas. Their response was a combination of laughter and groans. When they became quiet again, I said: "I am asking you to make today 'Christmas' for the poor and sick in Oaxaca." My words seemed to touch their hearts. The brunch lasted for four hours. When I was not preaching, I mingled with the people. Some told me that they had traveled an hour to come to the brunch because they believed in the works of TASH. One woman came from New York to see her sick brother and chose that weekend so that she could also come to the brunch. Her mother had recently died, and as she told me that her mother was a big fan of me and my ministry, she began to cry and thanked me for bringing her mother such happiness through the newsletters.

I believe that Christmas is more an attitude of the heart than a date on the calendar. Christmas happens when people help the poor and sick. This Christmas, Jesus does not want to be born again in a stable. He wants to be born in our hearts.

In the last newsletter, I mentioned how thankful I was for my fifty years of priesthood. Now as we approach Thanksgiving, it gives me another opportunity to thank God and all the benefactors for allowing my dream of helping the poor of Oaxaca to come true.

The Season of Thanksgiving and Christmas can be hectic times. Often by the time Christmas arrives people are exhausted. I want to encourage you to make November 28 a real THANKSgiving, and December 25 a day of celebrating our Savior.

God bless you and your families!
Fr. Scott



SERVANT LEADERSHIP by Pete Noll

With Thanksgiving coming up, I wanted to share a personal reflection. I first learned Spanish in Guatemala, as I went down there as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1997. The translation for Thanksgiving Day was “Día de *Accion* de Gracias.” That struck me as interesting as it highlighted the “action” part of being thankful. I decided to take that challenge upon myself and decided to volunteer at a food bank in Guatemala City on Thanksgiving morning.

It was incredible to meet the folks at the food bank who served food to the homeless on a daily basis. I was also inspired to see the exchange of gratitude offered by those who were giving and those who were receiving the modest meal. Often, I find myself somewhat overwhelmed with the extraordinary amount of people in need. It would be easy to paralyze myself. But if I allow myself to act, I am usually amazed at how simple and rewarding it is. The quote on the TASH website from Fr. Scott is “Every person you help . . . makes ripples in society.” May this holiday season be one of kindest and action.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT and TRANSPARENCY



Your donations, no matter the size, are critical to our serving the mission. Together with Fr. Scott, we strive for a transparent handling of all donations to TASH. One of the ways we do that is via an annual audit. We recently received Platinum Status by Guidestar, a leading source of nonprofit information. But beyond the financial numbers, is the humanitarian impact, often represented with testimonials, photos

and other evaluation metrics. In September and October, I was able to visit all the projects. We will continue to share our work in Oaxaca, not only in La Clínica, but also our partners at www.tashinc.org/partners.

In honor of Fr. Scott’s 50th anniversary, we continue to seek out opportunities to assure that our resources reach those in marginalized conditions. This is only made possible because of each one of you; and we believe this is a tremendous testament to your faith and trust in our work.



WITNESS to OAXACA

As we look for partners to support, we are excited by stories of opportunity and success. We encountered one such amazing story at Canica, a nonprofit with 27 years of service in Oaxaca providing education, nutrition, and a community of support to children living and working on the street. During a recent visit, we met Memo. Ten years ago, a Canica staff member invited Memo and his mother to know Canica. At the time, Memo was entering his third year working on a street corner, juggling, selling bottles of water, panhandling for enough money to feed his family. He was eleven years old.

Memo's mother agreed to let him attend Canica's school, where he received daily meals as well as an education through their mixed-aged classrooms. He thrived in mathematics and learned to write stories. He also loved playing sports with his friends after lunch. "It was my first moment of childhood and also my first moment of thinking I would not be on the street, or worse, in a gang, for my entire life."



Memo continued with the program and watched his Canica classmates succeed. He has a friend who is studying to be a lawyer and another who is a teacher. Memo chose to stay closer to home and he now works as the Canica advocate and program coordinator for at-risk teens. He spends more than half his time on the streets, talking to teens about Canica's support programs, recruiting them to join the school. He also will follow up with teens who miss classes. The temptation of gangs can be a distraction but "the teens know that Canica offers more opportunity and more hope. If we show them that we care and we won't give up, they come back."

At Canica, the entire family is required to join the program. Parents must attend workshops that range from technical skills to domestic violence prevention. They also serve *tequio*, volunteer hours to improve the school facilities or to support the staff.

As Memo speaks, his eyes are sparkling, and he gestures a lot with his hands with excitement. He has a lot of gratitude for Canica. He also has ideas on how it could continue to grow as Oaxaca continues to struggle with over 5,000 street children. Memo would like to see trade programs because "not every kid is ready for university" and he knows that through more generous donations, Canica can expand to serve more children both in numbers and in the kinds of programs they offer. When we asked Memo if he had anything he would like to say to our community of donors, his arms extended wide as if he were going to hug all of us. "I am so thankful. Canica saved my life. This means that you, donors who support Canica, saved my life."



HUMOR



Q: What do you get when you cross a turkey with an octopus?

A: Enough drumsticks for Thanksgiving

Q: Why shouldn't you look at the turkey dressing?

A: Because it will make him blush.

The TASH community told me to stop telling Thanksgiving jokes, but I couldn't just quit "cold turkey."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Registration is now open for the April 4, 2020 Ole 5K.

Please visit: www.ole5k.com or www.tashinc.org/ole5k.

Next year's Ole 5 K race to support TASH's work will be held on April 4, 2020 in Harmar Grove Pavilion at Pie Traynor in North Park. Save \$5 by registering by December 31.

We also are going to expand the visibility of our sponsor businesses and individuals.

If you are interested, please fill out the form online or contact me: pete.noll@tashinc.org

WE'RE ONLINE! @tashincorg

We have received almost \$20,000 in online donations since January, which is an option for those who prefer it. Starting November 15, you will find our upgraded system even easier to make a one-time or recurring donation with your credit card. The system will automatically notify you that your donation was processed; and email you a donor receipt acknowledgement, if you need it for tax purposes.

For those who may want to go completely paperless, please feel free to visit the website and sign-up for our e-TASH Times. We hope to start sending out digital newsletters starting in January 2020.

On a final note, you can now stream 50 episodes of Father Scott's radio program, *Joyful Reflections*, on the TASH website archives page. We will add 50 new programs every couple of months as a free resource. We hope you enjoy them.

**If you would like to make a donation to support the mission in Oaxaca,
we would truly appreciate it.**

**Please make a check out to TASH, Inc. and use the donation envelope included
or you can make a secure donation online at www.tashinc.org.**