



TASH TIMES

Vol 13 – January / February 2021. Oaxaca, Mexico.

www.tashinc.org

GREETINGS

Dear Friends,

If you are reading this, you have survived one of the most challenging years of your life. The pandemic brought changes that affected every aspect of daily living. Visiting family and friends was limited. Working and studying were done from home. There was a time when churches were closed, and when opened, seating was limited. There were parking lot Masses. Shopping was up one aisle and down another. We learned to stand on arrows to keep social distancing. People went to a bank to get money out wearing a mask. Medical terms became a part of everyday conversation. One might wonder if God was taken off guard by the pandemic as much as we were.



A closed church in the Mixteca region.

Though I don't pretend to know when and how God works in our world, I do know that God has had a plan for our world since its creation. I also know that God has a plan for each one of us. Speaking through the Prophet Jeremiah, God said: "I know the plans I have for you. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future." God's plans are fashioned with great love and always include freedom for us to accept or reject them.



For the past twenty years, our faith has been shaken because of scandals in the Church, ugly political rhetoric, an unending quest for wealth, and a growing distrust of the media. Thus the question: "Why isn't God doing something?" During the 35 years that I preached parish missions, the theme of the first evening was: "A Christian Response to Stress." During the talk, I asked the people to make acts of faith concerning the way God works in our world. Here are three of them:

1. With God, when nothing seems to be happening, something is happening.
2. God may not always be on time but He is never late.
3. God's promises do not die of old age.

Studying the Bible, as well as the histories of the world and the Church, you will find that God often works behind the scenes. Yet, when good things begin to happen, non-believers call it a coincidence. When the number of cases started to drop this past summer, the Governor of New York said twice that God had nothing to do with it. People of faith do not believe in coincidences, they believe in God's love and mercy.

LEFT: Images from La Clínica del Pueblo.

The Prophet Isaiah said: "God's ways are not our ways, and God's thoughts are not our thoughts." I would add that God's timing is not our timing. God will act when the time is right to bring people to the realization that if they play "god", bad things will happen. Politicians, scientists and technocrats need to humbly turn to God before they destroy our world. For the rest of us, St. Paul gave this advice in his letter to the Romans: "Rejoice in hope, be patient under trial, be constant in prayer." St. Peter wrote: "Never interpret God's patience as indifference." God wants to give people the time to repent so they can go to heaven.

As we take on 2021 let us not take God for granted. Jesus wants us to make God our highest priority this year. If we do, then we can be hopeful and joyful and God will bless us. Jesus promised that He would be with us every day until the end of the world. May we never doubt His love for us.

You are daily in my prayers,
especially when you send me your prayer intentions.

God bless you!

Fr. Scott



Mother and child in the Mixteca.

■ SERVANT LEADERSHIP by Pete Noll

TASH was again blessed by an enormous outpouring of donations in 2020, in what many might have expected to be a difficult year for fundraising. We do not take that for granted. One of the key aspects of servant leadership is gratitude, which we hold in abundance even beyond the monetary donations. Many donors have included inspiring notes about keeping Fr. Scott's ministry for the poor in their thoughts and prayers.

In the past months, I have been so fortunate to receive gratitude from those directly benefiting from TASH's support. Probably one of the first words a beginning Spanish speaker learns is "Gracias" or "Muchas Gracias" for "Thank you" or "Many Thanks". In my recent interactions with patients or staff at La Clínica del Pueblo; those awaiting a hot meal in the food kitchen lines; or a partner organization receiving a lifeline grant, I have been touched by the words of gratitude, often accompanied by a hand over the heart or a fist bump. In times of pandemic, these modified expressions often replace the traditional hug or handshake, but they convey an equal sentiment of appreciation.



Children play at Canica.

Of course, we are not out of the woods, and in a meeting with the local Clínica leadership last week, they are predicting another three to six months of COVID-19 restrictions. It will probably be soon afterwards that La Clínica and other partner organizations could be deluged with the built-up needs that have accumulated since last March. In the short-term, while some hospital services are down, others are up. One specific example is that La Clínica gynecology team has seen a lot more cases of natural and cesarean births, as many of the public hospitals are attending exclusively COVID-19. Those expecting mothers are now seeking out other alternatives; and fortunately, that makes La Clínica well-positioned for that overflow. Meanwhile, at TASH, we will continue to communicate with gratitude and grace, putting into practice our Servant Leadership.

WITNESS TO OAXACA by Pete Noll

Can you say “Grandmother of the Year”? I had gotten a quick briefing from La Clínica’s social worker about a patient that I could interview for this edition of the TASH Times. She recounted to me that Juventina, 73- years old, was from the small town of Ejutla. She only received a grade school education, as the family didn’t have enough resources to send all the children to school. She later married and had 10 children. She is now the sole caretaker of her 82-year-old husband. He had been bedridden for two-years after being attacked and struck by a bull. The social worker shared that Juventina would take care of her husband, washing him, changing diapers and providing a bucket for urine, as a bed pan is not a resource in rural villages. As I approached her hospital bed, I wondered if she would be sunk in despair with all the challenges. Whoa was I wrong! Juventina was full of life and spunk. If I had investigated the meaning of her name before the encounter and not after, I would not have been so surprised by her youthful attitude in the face of her current circumstances. Juventina does in fact translate to “youth or youthful.”

Even with the mask on, her hopeful spirit radiated during the conversation. She said that she was having a knee replacement because she could no longer handle the pain. She needed to manage the family farm of corn, beans, and squash. In addition, she raised chickens, turkeys and other farm animals. She would need to sell some of the animals as the only source of income to cover urgent healthcare needs. Again, with the public hospitals only covering essential cases, it is most likely that they would have put off her surgery for months, despite the debilitating pain.

I asked her how she had come to find La Clínica. She said several years back that she had brought her granddaughter down to remove her gallbladder. It had been successful, and she appreciated the staff treatment and the low costs. She said that La Clínica was now their hospital. As I told her to rest up for her surgery the next day, she shared that *Primeramente Dios* – “God Willing” – she would make a full recovery so she could continue to “*echarle ganas*”, best translated as continue to work hard for her and her husband’s well-being.

For all of us who are grandparents, have living grandparents, or hold fond memories of our grandparents, we can only be inspired by the dedication, can-do attitude and faithfulness of this amazing woman. Her village is only accessible by dirt roads. Her only cash income is from selling her poultry. She is a living example of a person that TASH can help thanks to your continued donations.



RIGHT: (Top and middle) Juventina prepares for her knee replacement surgery at La Clínica. (Bottom) Juventina’s home.

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES



2021 Ole 5k Benefit Race: Early Bird special until March 30, 2021. Save \$5 when you register at www.ole5k.com. We have reserved the same venue for next year, Saturday, October 2, so please mark your calendars.

Also, to assure that the race raises the needed funds to send down to the La Clinica and other partner organizations, we are calling on all our superhero sponsors to return for the 13th edition of Ole 5k. You can find all the information on the Ole 5k website at www.tashinc.org/ole5k.

Why become a Sponsor?

1. Promote your socially responsible business or company.
2. Highlight individuals and family contributions to the Ole 5k.
3. Support TASH and our mission to serve the economically poor in Oaxaca, Mexico.
4. Be an invaluable part of a fun and festive benefit race in Pittsburgh, PA, the 13th edition of the Ole 5k.
5. Receive publicity on our website, social media platforms, and t-shirts (500+ runners).

Planned Giving: A gift to TASH improves lives. Behind every patient treated are loyal supporters, like you, who make their care possible. Every time an individual enters La Clínica, receives affordable and quality attention, or needs emergency care, your generosity is felt and remembered.

In addition to supporting the mission of TASH, a planned gift can provide substantial tax advantages, especially on gifts of stocks and real estate. To learn more, you can visit the website:

<https://tashinc.org/donate/planned-giving/> or contact us at 412-219-9099



Mother and child visit grandmother at La Clínica del Pueblo.

   @tashincorg – Follow us on social media for more updates.

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.