



TASH TIMES

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www.tashinc.org

■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

As the pandemic continues, it is only natural for people to ask: “Why doesn’t God help us?” It is a question that has echoed down the centuries when people suffer. There have been plagues throughout history, but they were never pandemics because there was no international travel. Now our world has become so connected that what happens in one country can send shock waves throughout the world. The Book of Job describes a man who has lost everything, even his health. When he is visited by his “friends”, they tell him that he must have sinned against God in some way. Job says that he has not sinned, nor will he curse God for his misfortune. He will trust the Lord. At the end of the book, God rewards him for his trust.

If you find yourself exhausted by Covid and anxious about all the media reports, never give up on God. It is one thing to trust God when your life is fine. It is another thing to trust God during Covid since we have no guarantee that we won’t get sick even after receiving the vaccine and the booster. With each new strain we cry: “When will this end God?” Our faith tells us that God cares for us and will bless us during difficult times. However, when, and how the blessing comes is a mystery. God knows what is best for us if we trust. If we don’t panic. If we take one day at a time. On a number of occasions, I have given a person The Knots Prayer in spiritual direction. I ask the person to reflect often on the prayer.

THE KNOTS PRAYER

Dear God: Please untie the knots that are in my mind, my heart, and my life. Remove the have knots, the can knots, and the do knots that I have in my mind. Erase the will knots, may knots, might knots that may find a home in my heart. Release me from the could knots, would knots, and should knots that obstruct my life. And most of all, Dear God, I ask that you remove from my mind, my heart, and my life all of the “am knots” that I have allowed to hold me back, especially the thought that I am not good enough. Amen



Grandmother with grandson born at La Clinica del Pueblo

One of the sad consequences of Covid is the number of suicides that have taken place among young adults. Some go to college believing in God only to have professors tell them that there is no God, there is no afterlife and organized religion is a sham. Some leave college as atheists or agnostics and hostile to organized religion. When a crisis occurs (like Covid) and they are faced with their mortality, they soon realize that their beliefs do not always protect them from life’s harsh realities. Overwhelmed and despairing, (since they now believe there is no God nor afterlife) they commit suicide, which leaves their families and friends devastated. During my 52 years of priesthood, the most difficult times I have had to preach were Funeral Masses for young adults who committed suicide.

You will be reading this reflection during Lent. A season that speaks directly to our hearts. A time of self-discovery. Having Lent during another year of Covid intensifies our need to trust God as He works in our lives even through Covid.

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Father Scott, continued

Here are some lessons we can learn from the pandemic this Lent.

Daily express your love to family and friends.

Attend each Mass as if it were your last Mass.

Help the poor.

Always be prepared to go to heaven.

Please pray for the people of Oaxaca.

May God bless you! You are daily in my prayers.

Fr. Scott

■ **Servant Leadership with Friar Carlos Eduardo Pech Ceballos**

(Interviewed by Pete Noll)

Please tell us about yourself and your upbringing.

I was born in 1987 in a small village in southern Mexico, not far from current day Cancun. At a very young age, my two brothers, my mom and I moved in with our grandparents in nearby Baca. My father migrated to Cancun to find work. I grew up happy, between toucans and monkeys, while living in a humble, palm-roofed palapa.

Fr. Carlos had the opportunity to attend school and excelled. Along the way, he received government scholarships to ascend through high school and into the university, where he earned a degree in accounting.

Fr. Carlos recalls that religion and faith played an important role in his upbringing. From an early age, he was curious about exploring the purpose of his existence. In parallel, like many young men, he had a girlfriend, secured a company job, and imagined a future in a more traditional sense. It was during a time of reflection that he felt called to a life committed to faith and the church.

Would you share with us your walk towards becoming a Capuchin Friar?

Serendipitously, my former girlfriend introduced me to the Capuchins, who had recently arrived in Cancun. I discovered how these brothers had decided to live their life in a humanistic way. I appreciated how they got involved in their communities, working hand-and-hand with the poor and for the poor. I realized for me, I could better understand God when I was with the people, living the faith. That is what I felt I learned from the brothers. Since that time, I have further deepened my belief in the charisma ways of the Catholic church – to live the gospel through social justice action. Yes, to pray privately, but to live my faith together in the communities.

What brought you to Oaxaca and what are you currently involved with?

Our Capuchin organization has different sites in Mexico. We work in the Yucatan, Puebla, Mexico City, Michoacan, and Oaxaca. In 2017, I was invited to Chalcatongo, Oaxaca, roughly six hours from Oaxaca City, the last several hours on unpaved roads. There I met Friars Enrique and Justino, with whom I developed a close affinity and bond. I was soon invited to start my pastoral work there in twelve communities. What I quickly came to learn is that the local Capuchin organization *Sercade* was not only involved in pastoral work, but also social works. They welcomed people from all walks of life and creeds. In the past several years, I have been fortunate to work in agriculture, small business, health, education, and water projects in the Mixteca.

What has been your relationship with La Clinica del Pueblo, Anna Seethaler?



Fr. Carlos pictured in the forefront, at the dispensary in the Mixteca, Oaxaca

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Interview, continued

When I first met Friar Justino, he shared the story of the hospital for the poor and how it was started by a fellow Capuchin from the United States. It caught my attention. There are many projects started by Capuchins and to come across one firsthand was inspiring. I had never met Fr. Scott, but now we had a chance to collaborate with his project. I then met doctors, nurses, their director and you, Pete. La Clínica started to run medical missions in the Mixteca. Then in 2020, TASH made a significant financial contribution to help us build our own medical dispensary. The same year, I was invited to join the Clinic's advisory Board. I feel so blessed to have this opportunity.

You mention this opportunity, what is it that you hope to contribute to the advisory Board?

I hope to contribute charisma, brotherhood, and servant leadership. I enjoy working directly with people. I have seen that in medicine, there is the technical side, but also, the human side. I will focus on the mission to serve the poor by caring for the well-being of the patients in the center.

As you know, TASH's resources come from an amazing group of individuals, who decided to join in solidarity with Fr. Scott's vision and the families in Oaxaca. Would you be able to share some final words with them?

Thank you for all you do to support the projects. It is so extraordinary to imagine people who have not been able to visit the hospital firsthand but have the trust in Fr. Scott. But also, people from another country that ultimately have made a commitment to make the world more human and just; and are thus willing to help others whom they have never met.

■ Witness to Oaxaca

In Fr. Scott's introductory message, he invites you to help the poor. Of course, that is the definition of La Clínica that helps dozens of patients like Ana, every day! Ana Patricia Aguilar Cruz was born on November 18, 1995, in Mexico City. From her birth until she was seven years old, she lived with her father Miguel, her mother Julia, and two sisters. Unfortunately, her parents divorced after constant arguments and economic difficulties. A short time later, Julia, her mother, met Cidonio in Mexico City, whom she would marry two years later and with whom she would form a family again. From their new marriage, two more siblings were born.

When Ana was nine years old, the family decided to move back to San Miguel Aloapam Oaxaca, Ana's mother's original birthplace. It is located in the mountains about two hours from Oaxaca City. They were to start anew in this farming village. It would require a lot of labor to maintain the family of seven. During her childhood, Ana recalls being relatively shy, as her parents were often strict. Ana attended primary school and during her schooling she remembers having been interested in learning, but unfortunately due to lack of financial resources she could not continue her education beyond sixth grade.

She remembers that when she was young, she enjoyed going out and playing with her friends. She became more sociable and dedicated herself to working in a local diner to help with the household expenses. Also, it was at this time, and only 15 years old, that she met her future husband, David Cruz, who was 18 at the time. After only four months of courtship, they decided to get married; When she turned 18 years old, she left home to start a family with her husband David, who currently works in an aluminum workshop and is the main source of income. Their home is modest, constructed of wood and aluminum sheets. At the age of 20, they had their first and only son, also named David Cruz, who is now 6 years old.

Recent events over the past two years that have marked her life have been her ailments. Since she was diagnosed with appendicitis, she had severe pain and decided to go for a medical evaluation. But due to lack of resources the only



Ana recovering well at La Clínica

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Witness, continued

apparent option was to go to the large public civil hospital. Much to her surprise, she was denied treatment and medical care. A note: While this denial should not happen in what is purported as free, universal healthcare, at TASH we can attest that this reality happens far too often.

Fortunately for Ana and her family, this rejection was not the end of her story. Thanks to a relative of hers who had known about the Clinic, she was referred there. Her husband, seeing that she was in severe pain, took the initiative to go to the Anna Seethaler Hospital (Clinica del Pueblo) to find out if they could treat her. As La Clinica has done for over two decades, they received her with open arms, despite her inability to pay for the full cost of the medical attention.

On January 6, she underwent surgery to address the severe pain caused by her gallbladder. According to the post-assessment of the doctors at the clinic, Ana is back in excellent health after surgery and was discharged the following day. Days later, she went back for her post-surgical evaluation. She shared that she is in “excellent spirits as she was cleared with a full bill of health.” She, like her husband, also shared, “We are so grateful for the support that we received at La Clinica del Pueblo. We thought we had no options left.” The story of Ana is what inspires us to continue to reach out to you, the TASH community, to assure that La Clinica can help the poor for decades to come.



FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES

Save the date, next year’s race is confirmed for October 8, 2022 in North Park. You can learn more at www.ole5k.com.



Joyful reflections: We have uploaded radio programs 151 – 200 to our website to provide you with a free resource to listen to Fr. Scott’s messages of hope and reflection. You can find them here: <https://tashinc.org/history/archives/>

Enjoy!

We are excited to share that TASH has again received the highest seal of transparency from Candid (formerly GuideStar), an information service specializing in reporting on U.S. nonprofit companies. Our work would not be possible without your trust and generosity.

Platinum
Transparency
2022

Candid.

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.



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