



TASH TIMES

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■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

When the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Juan Diego at Guadalupe, She said to him: “Am I not here who am your Mother? Is there anything else that you need?” Five hundred years later she is asking us the same questions. How we answer these questions will determine how we will live in 2023. In January we don’t know how this year will unfold. We do know that we will have little control over the economy, the weather, wars and disease. Yet bad news will not overwhelm us if we turn to our Blessed Mother and trust that Jesus will send His Mother to be “our way, our truth and our life” in difficult times. I want to encourage you to turn to Mary often this year. Mary is the patroness of our country under the title of the Immaculate Conception.

When I first traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico in 1998, I came to realize the deep devotion that the people have to Our Lady of Guadalupe. The more I saw the role she played in their daily lives, it seemed like she was a part of their DNA. A Marian prayer has the words: “Never was it known that anyone who fled to Your protection, employed Your help or sought Your intercession was left unaided.” When I returned to Oaxaca the following year to bless the Clinic, I placed the Clinic under the protection of Our Lady Of Guadalupe. Since then, the Clinic has withstood a number of earthquakes with minimal damage.

Many of the people in the State of Oaxaca are illiterate. They often do not get to Mass because of the shortage of priests, especially in the mountains. Their prayer lives are simple. They know that they can turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe when they are fearful and ask her to bless and protect them.

I live in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In the past few years the Diocese has undergone a major revamping of their parishes because of a shortage of priests and a realignment of population from the city to the suburbs. A new parish is composed of two or more former parishes. Each new parish has a new name. After consultation with the people, the Bishop assigns the name. What strikes me is how many of the new parishes have a Marian title. In fact the parish in which I help is now called Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven).

Since the Blessed Mother’s appearance at Guadalupe, she has also appeared in Portugal, France, and Ireland. Her messages urge people to pray for peace in the world and for the conversion of Russia. Since the invasion of the Ukraine, praying for the conversion of Russia takes on a new urgency. At the beginning of a New Year, it is important to establish habits that will guide us during the year. I hope you will look to Mary for guidance, strength and courage in the New Year. May She wrap her arms around you and your loved ones and keep you safe!

Be assured of my prayers for you during 2023.

God bless you!

Fr. Scott



Our Lady of Guadalupe continues to look over La Clinica del Pueblo.

■ Servant Leadership – Eight Days in Oaxaca- by Charley B. Gates, MD

TASH is changing lives. I am more convinced of this than ever after my tenth visit to Oaxaca from December 3-10. To illustrate this, I would like to share brief details about three individuals whom I met and the organizations that serve them: La Clinica del Pueblo, the School of Music, and Canica.

La Clinica del Pueblo “Anna Seethaler” (TASH’s flagship nonprofit hospital since 2000)



TASH Board and La Clinica staff meet with Cenobia two days before the surgery to restore her eyesight. Changing lives!

During our time at La Clinica, we visited the home of Cenobia Hernandez, a single mother who was losing her vision. Her sole source of income is a small store that she runs out of her home. After unsuccessful eye surgery with an outside ophthalmologist, she underwent revision eye surgery at La Clinica. The revision operation was a success, and the cost of her care will be covered 100% by TASH. This is just one example of many patients who have benefitted from the high quality and affordable health care that La Clinica offers. In 2022, more than 8,000 patients have been treated at La Clinica.

There are personnel additions and infrastructure developments that will enhance La Clinica’s ability to deliver care in 2023. In July, La Clinica hired a talented, bilingual program director. She is from Mexico City and has studied at the London School of Economics. She

is leading a program that focuses on the prevention of diabetes. I reviewed her protocols and methods, and I was impressed by the program’s rigor.

Infrastructure improvements completed at La Clinica in 2022 include a state-of-the-art XR room with digital capabilities. In 2023, an electronic medical record (EMR) will be installed. The EMR is a significant technological step forward. It will improve patient care and ensure that data-driven, evidence-based medicine is practiced.

School of Music (classical musical instruction for low-income youth)

During our visit to the School of Music, one of the scholarship students, Jonathan Maldonado, emphatically thanked TASH for its generosity. He found himself in a desperate domestic situation and had stopped attending school. Neighbors directed him to Father Renteria and the School of Music. He enrolled and was awarded a scholarship to resume his studies. He said that this scholarship has changed his life, and he called TASH his **guardian angel**. In all, TASH currently sponsors 45 students with scholarships.

We also enjoyed a performance by the full orchestra. They performed classical pieces as well as a few Christmas favorites such as Tchaikovsky’s “Russian Dance” and excerpts from Handel’s “Messiah.” There simply are not words to describe how inspiring it is to hear these children perform. About 150 children currently attend the school. They meet for four hours per day, six days per week.

Canica (after-school program for street children)

At Canica, Veronica, one of the mothers that I met described the impact that Canica has had on her son, Edwin’s life. Previously, her son worked to load fruit onto trucks and did not attend school. She asked me in Spanish, “What future could he possibly hope for?” After enrolling in the after-school program at Canica, he is earning passing grades in school, and he has found positive adult role models. Finally, Edwin has a path forward towards a brighter future. His mother expressed her deep gratitude to TASH for its years of consistent support of Canica.

Servant Leadership, continued

We also celebrated the inauguration of the second-floor classroom. This construction project added space that will allow the enrollment of thirty new children in addition to the ninety-five children who currently attend. Canica's program is comprehensive and includes physical exercise, nutrition, tutoring, and psychological counseling.

As I mentioned, the most powerful moment of the week came when scholarship student Jonathan Maldonado called TASH his **guardian angel**. TASH's programs are possible because of your prayers, contributions, and support. Thus, by proxy, you are also **Jonathan's guardian angel**. Please take a moment to reflect on that idea: **you are Jonathan's guardian angel**. Together, we are changing lives in Oaxaca.

Thank you for your continued support of TASH.

God love you.

Charley B. Gates, MD

■ Witness to Oaxaca – by Pete Noll



TASH Board members visit the micro-enterprise initiatives – December 2022.

On October 8, 2022, the livelihoods of almost 200 people would be hit hard. These workers had made a living on the city landfill for the past 43 years, when it was arbitrarily and without any clear explanation closed by the local government. **From one day to the next, these families didn't know when their next daily wage would come, nor how they would feed their children and themselves.** You may recall from the July/August '21 edition of the TASH Times, that we had provided them with access to free healthcare at La Clinica del Pueblo, which had been a great success.

Owing to TASH's commitment not to abandon the poor, we had to pivot our support to their now most urgent need – helping them to figure out what was next. In collaboration with the parish of Padre Renteria, and another local nonprofit, *Simply Smiles*, we began to meet with the families and devise a strategy together.

What was the common denominator, we asked ourselves? It didn't take long to figure out that they were entrepreneurs by nature, working tirelessly for twelve hours-a-day and selling recyclable items in the landfill that could find a market price. But their concerns went beyond losing their individual jobs. They were concerned about how to provide support for their children and the elderly who were now in the most vulnerable situations.

Working diligently and in partnership, within weeks, we had established a project to provide start-up capital to 40 micro-enterprises. The micro-enterprises were based on their ideas and experiences. One worker, Freddy, had previously learned how to bake bread. He and his wife started a bakery. Another single mother wanted to keep a flexible schedule to pick up her two children from school. She buys, kills, and sells fresh chicken cuts on the main street by the school. Each idea was quickly budgeted, TASH approved an emergency grant, and the seed capital was distributed.

Last week, TASH's President, Charley Gates, and newest Board member, Charlie Baker, got to see firsthand some of the projects in action. At the bakery start-up, new owner Freddy shared with us: *"I was genuinely concerned because I knew I could bake, but what if the clients didn't like it. How would I feed my children? But in the first weeks, I have seen my breads, pizza, and other products fly out the door. So, I couldn't be more motivated! My next purchase will be an electric dough mixer."*

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Witness to Oaxaca, continued

As witnesses to his early success, TASH is equally excited by his progress.

Personally, as a near native Pittsburgher (known for blue collar, working class), and now living/working in my adopted city of Oaxaca, I am honored to have the opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with these kind and hardworking people. I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the New Year by sharing my gratitude for the TASH community's generosity. **In 2023, we are as committed as ever to carrying out Fr. Scott's ministry and mission in Oaxaca, Mexico. We trust you are, too!**



Freddy converted his work ethic as a landfill worker to a start-up with his bakery to provide for his family!



FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES



We hope that you will join us as a sponsor, racer participant, volunteer, or race day attendee as we aim to set a new bar with a \$150,000 fundraising goal to celebrate the 15th edition of the Ole 5k Benefit. 100% of the proceeds will be sent to our projects in Oaxaca, Mexico, where many families must get by on \$5 - \$7 per day.

With great need comes great generosity. Family fun for a worthy cause!

You can find more information and updates: www.ole5k.com

Planned Giving – One way to support local heroes is assuring that TASH has the resources to send down to Oaxaca, Mexico. 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 Clinica, 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.

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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