



TASH TIMES

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www.tashinc.org

■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

Two brothers were visiting grandma a few weeks before Christmas. When they went to bed they knelt down to say their prayers. When the older brother was finished with his prayers, the younger brother started to scream: “GOD, FOR CHRISTMAS I WANT A BASEBALL GLOVE, A SKATE BOARD AND A NINTENDO.” The older brother said to the younger brother: “You don’t have to scream, God’s not deaf.” The younger brother said: “I know but grandma is.”

It is important not to approach Thanksgiving and Christmas as if God is deaf. It is not uncommon for me to hear people say that they have quit praying because their prayers are never answered. Prayers are always answered, but not always in the way we want. God takes our prayers and fashions them into what is best for us. **The answer may not be given immediately, but at a time that brings us closer to God and to His people.**

From Thanksgiving to Christmas is a time to practice the four types of prayers: Thanksgiving, Contrition, Adoration and Petition. Obviously at Thanksgiving, people are eager to express their gratitude to God for all their blessings. Prayers of Contrition not only happen at the beginning of Mass but also when people go to confession during the Advent Season. Petitions, although a regular part of people’s prayers, are more abundant during Advent, since the cry of Advent is: “Come Lord Jesus, Come.” As for prayers of Adoration, they are very much a part of the Christmas Season, as we sing: “O Come, Let us adore Him.”

No matter what prayer you say, or the frequency of saying the prayer, a true Christian must believe that God is listening and is active in your life. To doubt this only brings discouragement and depression. When I first made my decision to gather funds to build a clinic in Oaxaca, I called on God for help since I believed that it was God’s Will. Both in the States and in Oaxaca it was slow going, at first. The doctor I met in Oaxaca, who was working with the poor, was skeptical because I only met him on the last day of my visit and had promised him that I would raise money for a clinic. At home I had to convince the leaders of my community that raising money for the clinic would not lessen the money that I brought in to support the community.

My prayer during this time was to say to God: “If this is Your Will, I know it will work out.” By saying that, I didn’t expect that everything would go smoothly. It never does when there are a lot of people involved. But I did believe that God would work through all of the challenges, and there were plenty in the beginning. Trusting God helped me deal with the challenges.

The holidays can be very stressful for a variety of reasons. The secret to joyful, peaceful holidays is to slow down, spend less money and spend more time in prayer. We were not created because God needed us but because God wanted us. Each member of the Holy Trinity wants to be involved in our lives. Our Father wants to forgive us when we are sorrowful. Jesus wants to share with us His Body and Blood in the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit wants to provide us with the grace to make good decisions.



Fr. Scott congratulating a race medalist, as part of the 15th anniversary of the Olé 5k Benefit Race.

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Fr. Scott, continued

Advent and Christmas are my favorite seasons. They speak powerfully of God's presence and love for us. I will be praying for all of you in a special way during this holy time of the year.

Wishing you many blessings!

God bless you!

Fr. Scott

■ Servant Leadership – “Life Is Difficult” - by Charley B. Gates, MD

“Life is difficult.” Harvard psychiatrist M. Scott Peck, MD, begins his book *The Road Less Traveled* with this timeless observation. Life is difficult because problems continually arise in a person's life. Problems lead to suffering and sometimes to failure. These difficult situations, Dr. Peck believes, offer a person growth and development **opportunities that ultimately lead to fulfillment.** In this way, problems are not an obstacle to a fulfilling life. Rather, they are the medium through which a person lives a fulfilling life.

A life without problems is simply not possible. Even if a person could magically resolve all the problems that he is facing at this very moment, new ones would quickly arise to take their place. Instead of wishing that problems would disappear, Dr. Peck recommends that a person face his problems head-on with a dedication to the truth.

The truth of a situation is often easier for other people to see. An individual person immersed in a problem is often convinced of an alternate reality. He ignores signs to the contrary. His ego often leads the way in this misinterpretation. If this person listens to those around him and seeks the truth, he eventually sees things precisely as they are.

One definition of suffering is the moment when a person understands the true nature of the situation that he is facing. The discord between the perceived reality and the true reality creates pain. The moment of suffering – when a person is in pain – is the moment of truth. It is the moment when he is forced to embrace the way that reality actually is. All progress and meaningful change begin when a person starts with the truth. These changes can be profound, even transformative. The lives of many Saints demonstrate this.

Problems can also lead to failure. Failure teaches powerful lessons. Failure is a much better teacher than success. In fact, what is often perceived as failure is really a momentary setback during the journey to success. Thomas Edison, the quintessential American inventor and entrepreneur, famously “failed” in more than 10,000 attempts to develop the electric lightbulb. “I was never myself discouraged,” Edison later wrote, “or inclined to be hopeless of success. I did not consider those experiments as failures. I saw them as discoveries of ways that didn't work.” Great achievements in a person's life often follow profound suffering or fantastic failures.



Jonathan is one of TASH's more than 50 scholarship recipients. He has had to overcome the challenge of his mom's recent cancer diagnosis.

These issues know no borders. I see people facing similar problems both in Oaxaca and in Pittsburgh. The details may be different, but the principles are the same. In both countries, I see people who rise to the occasion and face their problems head-on full of faith, grit, and determination. They seek out the truth, and they embrace the growth opportunities that these difficult situations present. In this way, these people become stronger, more empathic, and more faithful. It is inspiring to witness.

I also see people in both countries who ignore their problems. They cling to their false interpretation of reality. They do not make efforts to recognize the truth of the situation. This approach creates worry and stress, and it impedes the person's growth and development. Also, the original problem remains unresolved and often worsens with time. This is illustrated by the

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Servant Leadership, continued

case of Don José, a patient with diabetes. Don José is an older gentleman from a remote part of Oaxaca. He ignored a small wound on his foot. Despite instructions from local doctors for more aggressive treatment, Don Jose persisted in his belief that the wound was not serious. Ultimately, the wound grew larger, became infected, and spread to his blood (sepsis). This was a life-threatening complication that required treatment with a below the knee amputation.

One of our missions in life is to become the best possible version of ourselves. We can move towards this goal through the relentless pursuit of the truth in the difficult situations in which we find ourselves. This presents us with opportunities to grow and develop in our faith, which propels us forward in the important work in which we are engaged. There is often suffering and pain along the way, but this process is worth the effort. The reward of a fulfilling life awaits.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for TASH's work in Oaxaca.

God love you.

Charley Gates, MD
President, TASH Board of Directors

■ Witness to Oaxaca – by Pete Noll

As part of the last newsletter of 2023, it feels like the perfect time to highlight the incredible work that the Clínica del Pueblo's CEO, Dra. Marissabel Casas Marroquín (Dra. Marissa), has accomplished during her first year on the job. She is a medically trained doctor from Mexico City who spent the previous eight years working in some of the most remote villages in southern Mexico, in the state of Chiapas. Oaxaca and Chiapas are #1 and #2 in being the Mexican states with the **least access to health care**. It is in this context that we are so fortunate to have someone like her.

Since her arrival, she has reiterated a clear and bold vision to continue to reach out to those most in need. In Oaxaca, there are villages that take more than 12 hours to reach. It is critical that the Clinica has outreach programs to get out to the people, in addition to running a modern and patient-centered hospital. Thus, as a core part of her strategy, **she has emphasized the work both within and outside the walls of the hospital**. With your support and her vision, we are confident that our work will reach tens-of-thousands in preventative care, improving the quality of life, even before needing to access a clinic or hospital.



Dra. Marissa (front center kneeling) is an example of servant and transformational leadership, prioritizing patient-centered care and a dynamic, organizational work culture.

While vision and strategy are priority components, Dra. Marissa has also demonstrated the administrative chops and team-building skills to assure that the hospital's resources are prioritized to serve the economically poor. The Clínica is open 24/7 and employs 60 collaborators, including specialists, M.D.s., nurses, X-ray tech, optometrist, social workers, community health workers, along with support staff.

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Witness to Oaxaca, continued

It is worth mentioning that recently we were able to arrange a video call with Dra. Marissa and Fr. Scott. He shared with her his gratitude for her commitment to serving and carrying on the mission of the Clínica del Pueblo, “Anna Seethaler.” Dra. Marissa later shared with me a reflection in Spanish, which I have translated here: **“The missions with the greatest achievements usually start with a single person (like Father Scott), and it is known that he alone will not be able to advance much, so everything possible is done to spread the actions in favor of the mission; That is what leaders do, be seekers of convictions, who become followers of the Mission.”**

As the Executive Director on-the-ground in Oaxaca, I can attest to the importance of honest, skilled, and committed leadership, like that of Dra. Marissa and other project leaders, to assure that TASH will continue to be effective stewards of the resources entrusted to us. We are so grateful for your support during the year, and if it is in your hearts and means, **we invite you to consider a year-end gift to allow us to carry on the much-needed work into 2024.** ¡Muchas gracias!



FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES



In the Jan/Feb TASH Times newsletter, we will be sharing photos and highlights from another successful Ole 5k Benefit race, held this past Saturday, October 8.

Also, we ask you to mark your calendars! TASH has reserved North Park again on September 28, 2024, to celebrate what will be our 16th edition of the race.

Please take note of TASH's official mailing address: Since 2018, TASH's official mailing address is: **8878 Covenant Ave #303, Pittsburgh, PA 15237.** If you made TASH part of your estate plan or assigned an annuity or future gift to Fr. Scott/TASH *before that date*, we would ask that you confirm that the TASH address is correct. Thank you.

Planned Giving – *Would you like to assure that TASH can continue to increase its impact?* A gift to TASH improves lives today and into the future. Behind every person served are loyal benefactors, like you, who make their care possible. Every time an individual enters the 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.



At the Clínica the staff provides care to those who are in need.

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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