



TASH TIMES

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■ GREETINGS

Dear Friends:

Our secular world is suspicious of anything supernatural. Many people do not believe in miracles. **So I would like to tell you a true story of a miracle that happened which has ties to Mexico.**



Health and Humanity: TASH will always be committed to those in need.

The story begins in the early 700s. Islamic forces began a conquest of Spain that was to last almost seven centuries. The town of Atocha, near Madrid, was taken by the Muslims and the men were imprisoned. If you were Catholic, no one but children, under the age of 12, was allowed to bring food to the prisoners. For the childless this was a slow death sentence, for parents a terrifying risk. Families began to beg Our Lady of Atocha for help, praying before her statue with the child Jesus in the church.

Soon there were reports of a mysterious young boy who appeared dressed like a pilgrim, carrying an inexhaustible basket of provisions, walking freely within the prison. At the same time, the women of the town found that the shoes of the statue of the Child Jesus were frequently worn out and dusty and had to be replaced. The Santo Niño also began to

appear to travelers throughout Spain. If the travelers were Catholic, the inn keepers would not provide them shelter for fear of being punished by the Muslims. Again, stories started to spread of a young boy dressed as a traveler who would appear to the Catholic travelers and show them the best places in the countryside to rest and the easiest roads to take to get to their destinations.

When the Spaniards came to the New World they brought their devotions with them. Those from Atocha brought the statue of Mary and her child. The statue from Atocha ended up in Zacatecas Mexico, where many of the men worked in the silver mines. One day an explosion trapped a number of miners. Their wives went to pray at church where they noticed that the statue of the infant Jesus was missing. The miners were rescued by a little boy who gave them water and showed them a way out. Soon the devotion to the Santo Niño of Atocha spread throughout Mexico. The parish priest began to take the Holy Child in procession during Christmas and the feast of the Virgin's Purification to the parish church at nearby Fresnillo. This sparsely populated and rugged mountainous area became a major place of pilgrimage.

In 1857, Severiano Medina from New Mexico made a pilgrimage to Fresnillo and took back with him a small statue of the Holy Child. This statue was enshrined in a private chapel in Chimayo near Santa Fe. Some of the first American troops to see action in World War II were from the New Mexico National Guard. They fought bravely on Corregidor with its underground tunnels and defenses. The Catholics remembered that the Santo Niño de Atocha had long been considered a patron of all who were trapped or imprisoned. Many of them made a vow that if they survived the war, they would make a pilgrimage from Santa Fe to Chimayo in thanksgiving. At the end of the war two thousand pilgrims,

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Fr. Scott, continued

veterans of Corregidor, Bataan, and Japanese prison camps together with their families walked the long and rough road from Santa Fe to Chimayo. Some walked barefoot to the little adobe shrine.

Miracles do happen! Christmas was the biggest.

God bless you!

Fr. Scott

■ **Servant Leadership** – “*Synergies Drive Impact*” - by Charley B. Gates, MD

There is a classic Aesop’s fable that offers a great lesson about the power of synergy. **Synergy is an interaction or cooperation such that the whole is greater than the sum of its component parts.** A father wanted to teach his son that value of synergy that comes from teamwork. He brought his son several sticks bundled together, and he asked his son to try to break the bundle. His son could not do it. He then opened the bundle and handed his son a single stick. He asked his son to try to break the individual stick. This time, his son did so easily. “You see,” said the father, “individually these sticks do not have much strength. But when you bundle them together, they have great strength.”

This fable conveys a timeless message about the synergy that comes from teamwork. Institutions working together is one type of teamwork that can produce powerful synergies. During my thirteenth visit to Oaxaca conducted from December 10-14, I witnessed many of these synergies in action. I would like to focus on the synergies that are transforming La Ciudad de los Niños, one of the orphanages that TASH supports.

In honor of his 80th birthday in June of this year, Father Scott made a request to raise \$66,000 to build a new dormitory at La Ciudad. The original dormitory was demolished after sustaining irreparable damage during a 7.7 earthquake in September of 2019. **TASH donors responded to Father Scott’s request with overwhelming generosity, and this fundraising goal was exceeded.**

During my recent visit, I toured the new dormitory. It is about 80% complete and is scheduled to be finished by the end of February. The construction is state-of-the-art, and the building is designed to withstand earthquakes up to 9.0 on the Richter scale, which is important as Oaxaca sits in a seismic zone. The new dorm will provide sleeping quarters that are more secure and more amenable to genuine rest. In addition, the dormitory will allow La Ciudad to expand its enrollment from 40 children up to 100 children.

TASH began to support La Ciudad in 2021. As I reflected on this partnership, the theme of synergies came to mind. In addition to providing funds for the demolition and the construction of the dormitories, TASH has added value to La Ciudad in a number of other ways:

- 1) TASH provided feedback regarding the timing and funding of the dormitory construction project.
- 2) TASH recommended the hiring of a social worker to assess the children’s situations and provide follow-up for those who leave the orphanage. La Ciudad agreed, and this social worker has provided invaluable insights.
- 3) TASH assisted La Ciudad to critically analyze its capacity to scale its services. In addition to the new dormitory, there will be other needs, such as staffing, to successfully increase enrollment.
- 4) TASH connected the executive director of La Ciudad with the executive director of Simply Smiles, another orphanage that TASH supports. This connection enabled the sharing of best practices and began a mutually supportive relationship that will hopefully bear much fruit.



TASH Board visiting the dormitory construction project (Dec 12, 2023)

Servant Leadership, continued

5) TASH facilitated an agreement to expedite and discount the medical care of any sick or injured child or staff member at La Clínica del Pueblo hospital. Several children have undergone success for surgeries and ten young boys were fitted for glasses at no cost because of this collaboration.

In these ways, **TASH is a true strategic partner to La Ciudad providing much more than economic support.** With 23 years of operating experience in Oaxaca, TASH has a strong network and a deep expertise in many facets of international philanthropy. This enables TASH to make connections among the other organizations that it supports. It also enables TASH to provide valuable strategic advice culled from previous projects that TASH has supported with other partners.

Wonderful synergies emerge as each partner organization is strengthened through capital support, strategic guidance, and access to TASH's partner network. In this case of La Ciudad, I am hopeful that this will translate into **happier, healthier, and more productive lives for these vulnerable children.**

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of TASH in 2024.

God love you.

Charley Gates, MD

■ Witness to Oaxaca – by Pete Noll



Three cheers for clean and safe drinking water. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Before we quickly turn our calendars to 2024, at TASH, **we want to express our deepest gratitude for all your support over the years.** It truly would not be possible without every one of YOU! The results are overwhelming, as I have the privilege to see them day-in and day-out. Fr. Scott's article reminds us of the power of miracles. In my opinion, his call to support the Clínica del Pueblo more than two decades ago is nothing short of a different miracle.

While Charley Gates, joined by Charlie Baker and Paula Wilde, were recently witness to the building of a 100-bed dormitory for the Ciudad de los Niños, I am also excited to share with you the outcome of another synergy and a newly installed clean and safe water tower. The project is in San Martin Mexicapam and part of the Clínica's intention to expand community health outreach, via education and prevention, to the population that surrounds the nonprofit hospital.

In 2022, Fr. Scott and the TASH Board, recognizing the indispensable need and urgency for clean drinking water, tasked me to see how we could make this happen. In more rural settings, I began to test a bucket Sawyer water filter. However, in large inner-city settings and when city water was contaminated, we needed an even more robust water filter. Together with the Planet Water Foundation we were assured that the filter, in technical terms, filtered down to .01 microns which **guarantees safe, drinkable water from both bacteria and viruses.** In addition, the AquaTower can filter and clean 1,000 liters of water per hour.

On December 4, with Planet Water, we installed the water tower, gave out 800 stainless steel cups, and provided training workshops to the parents' committee, teachers, and children on the importance of hygiene and clean water. Everyone was so engaged and excited. The immediate impact is to provide access to clean water for handwashing and human consumption to **over 500 children who attend primary school.**

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Witness to Oaxaca, continued

Apparently, it was such a hit, that a local news reporter covered the story, and we are getting inquiries about how to expand the program. In addition, for me, one of the most satisfying moments was to see a young boy, red in the face, having run over from recess, filling up and gulping down his cup of water. As he ran off, I asked: ¿Qué tal el agua? (How's the water?). Without hesitation and with a big smile on his face, he replied, "Sabe muy bueno." (It tastes great).

With that response and knowing that he represents just one of the hundreds of children who will benefit from this project, I conclude, again, thanking you for your trust in us, obviously inspired by Fr. Scott's original idea that came to life now 24 years ago. **We hope you will continue on our journey towards the 25th anniversary of TASH in 2025.**



Inauguration of AquaTower (Primary school in San Martin Mexicapam)

▶ SCAN CODE TO WATCH VIDEO ABOUT PROJECT



FUTURE EVENTS & UPDATES

2023 Olé 5k Benefit Race in photos. To see more photos, visit: <https://tashinc.org/ole-5k/>

Mark your calendar for the 2024 race: September 28 and take advantage of Early Bird rates by registering today: <https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/AllisonPark/TheOle5k>



We are excited to welcome Diane Kolling to the TASH team as our new administrative assistant here in Pittsburgh. She joins us after a career of 45 years at UPMC Passavant. Her contact email is diane.kolling@tashinc.org. Also, on behalf of TASH, we wish Kathleen and Brett Schurter all the best in their recent move to California and appreciate all they have done to support the organization over the years.

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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