



JOYFUL REFLECTIONS

Every person you help...makes ripples in society.

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TASHINC.ORG

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

Clinica Del Pueblo
"Anna Seethaler" A.C.
EST. 2000

GREETINGS

Dear Friends: Within a few short weeks, we will celebrate Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. All three generate emotions in people. Emotions of gratitude, wonderment, and amazement that another year has passed. Depending on your age, the emotions will differ. Some people look forward to the smells of Thanksgiving, the presents of Christmas, and the parties of New Years. Others look forward to thanking God, worshipping their Savior and making resolutions for the New Year.



Father Scott celebrates Mass in Oaxaca in August 2024.

For me, I find New Years a little scary. **Another year already!** I am reminded of something the humorist Andy Rooney once said. "Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end the faster it goes." Time does seem to fly. Celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Anna Seethaler Clinic/Hospital this year seems unbelievable. I still have memories of my first visit to Oaxaca.

During my years of preaching parish missions, I would tell the people that there is another way to spell love. You can spell it **TIME**. I suggest we ask ourselves two questions before the celebrations begin: **1. How do I plan to spend my time this holiday season? 2. With whom do I plan to spend it?**

I can't tell you how many times, in my 56 years of priesthood, I have heard someone say: "I should have been more attentive to my wife"; "I should have been more available to my children"; "I should have visited my parents more." We must realize that the only thing that we really do have is time. I find it amazing that we have so much technology to save time, but we never have enough time.

Michael Quoist wrote: "I went out Lord. People were coming and going, walking and running. Everything was rushing. Cars, trucks, the street, the whole town. The hours are too short. The days are too short. Our lives are too short. People were rushing not to waste time. They were rushing after time. To catch up with time, to gain time. In spite of all their efforts they are still short of time, of a great deal of time."

Lord, you must have made a mistake in your calculations. There is a big mistake somewhere. The hours are too short. The days are too short. Our lives are too short.

You who are beyond time, Lord, you smile to see us fighting it. And you know what you are doing. You make no mistakes in your distribution of time to us. You give each one of us time to do what you want us to do.

Lord, I have time. I have plenty of time. All the time that you give me. The years of my life, the days of my years, the hours of my days, they are mine. I am not asking you today, Lord, for time to do this and then that, but your Grace to do conscientiously, in the time that you give me, what you want me to do."

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Fr. Scott message, continued

God gives us exactly the amount of time we need to grow in holiness and to do God's Will. We do this by spending time in quiet prayer. And yet I hear people say that they can't find time to pray. The issue is not time but desire. If we really want to do something, for example, watch football for three hours - we find the time.

People who love each other will spend time together. They will make time to be together even though their jobs or schooling are very demanding. I once picked up a young man who was hitchhiking.

I asked him where he was going. He said he was going to visit his girlfriend. She lived forty miles away. Every weekend he hitchhiked the forty miles back and forth. He loved her and was willing to make the sacrifice.

Advent is the season leading up to Christmas. It is a time for extra prayer. The cry of Advent is "*Come, Lord Jesus, come.*" May Advent 2025 be a time of special blessings for you and your loved ones.

God bless you!
Fr. Scott



Father Scott and TASH donors pose with the youth symphony orchestra at Santa Cecilia.

The Myth of the Self-Made Man

The concept of the "*self-made man*" forms an important part of American culture. The "land of the free and home of the brave" offers its citizens more freedoms and opportunities than any other country. Talent, effort, and hard work have the potential to bring about a dramatic rise in one's station in life.

Benjamin Franklin is often identified as embodying the ideals of the self-made man. Through effort and persistence, he rose from poverty to become a successful printer, inventor, philosopher, and Founding Father.

Yet, no one is truly self-made. Every man is part of a community, and his livelihood depends upon that community, whether or not he recognizes it.

Benjamin Franklin had plenty of help along the way—as noted by Walter Isaacson in his excellent biography

about the Founding Father—and Franklin himself knew this. He never made any claim to being self-made. Instead, he recognized and valued the power of community. As a young businessman, he founded the Junto—a club of young professionals dedicated to mutual improvement. They met regularly, shared their successes and challenges, and discussed ways in which they could improve themselves and their businesses.

When taken to an extreme, the notion of being self-made can lead to isolation and an undervaluation of the community. This is particularly a risk in the modern US, a land rife with abundance and modern conveniences, making the need to rely on others in the community less pressing. Instead of asking a neighbor for assistance, for example, one can engineer the solution on Amazon with just a few clicks.

In Oaxaca, the organizations that TASH supports often recognize the power of the community. These

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Myth of the Self-Made Man, continued

organizations have limited resources, so it's more natural to look to each other for support. At the Saint Cecilia School of Music, the motto "*Tejiendo Comunidad*" (Weaving Community) is prominently displayed almost everywhere, including its prominent position on the stage where the youth orchestra practices. The emphasis is on the whole rather than on the individual.

This emphasis on community has given rise to a stunning transformation in the neighborhood surrounding Santa Cecilia over the past fifteen years. Previously, the criminal element flourished and drug abuse was rampant. The streets were not safe for the children. This is quite a contrast to the current neighborhood, which is vibrant and boasts of police protection, paved roads, and an internationally recognized youth orchestra.

The construction of a church large enough to hold 1,000 people, funded by TASH, became the rallying point that propelled Santa Cecilia's transformation. This gave the people a place to meet, worship, and discuss ways to improve their lives and neighborhood, akin to Franklin's meetings of the Junto. Led by Father Jose Renteria, they started the Santa Cecilia School of Music to give the children a safe after-school activity and to enrich their lives with positive adult role models.

The sense of pride and enthusiasm among the people as they worked together to build something larger than themselves was undeniable.

People took notice of the transformation. The neighborhood came to be recognized by the government, which led to the introduction of utilities and other public services. Professional musicians and music teachers offered their services and expertise to the school free of charge. As a result, the youth orchestra developed into a talented and sought-after musical group. They have traveled to France to perform on a world stage, and several students have earned scholarships to study music formally in Germany and Japan.

Working in isolation, Father Renteria or a few parents or TASH could never have brought about this stunning turnaround. Working together as a group, with each person playing his or her role while valuing the contributions of others, made it possible. Collaboration and community are the pillars of the Santa Cecilia success story.

Thank you for your continued financial support and prayers as TASH carries out its mission in the most impoverished communities of Oaxaca.

God love you.

Charley B. Gates, MD

President, TASH Board of Directors

Introducing Lorenza Rojas, a nursing scholarship student sponsored by TASH

By Charley B. Gates, MD

TASH strongly believes in the importance of education and its ability to positively impact the trajectory of a student's life. This is the case with Lorenza Rojas – a resilient, intelligent, and compassionate scholarship student who is pursuing a nursing degree.

Lorenza was born into a family with limited resources. Lorenza's father, Alejandro, emigrated to the US to work on a farm in San Diego. Lorenza's mother, Bernardita, worked on a local farm.

Bernardita's educational formation was cut short when her father died while she was in the first grade. Bernardita's mother pulled her out of school and put her to work to help support the family. Denied the opportunity to pursue her



Lorenza with her mother, Bernardita

own education, Bernardita is firmly committed to providing this opportunity to her children.

The physical labor has taken a toll on her parents, explained Lorenza, particularly on her mother. Lorenza says, "*Due to her age, diabetes, and physical exhaustion, my mother can no longer work as she used to.*"

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Nursing Scholarship, continued

To help support her family, Lorenza worked an after-school job at a convenience store. Despite her efforts, Lorenza was not able to raise enough money to continue her studies. Her education came to a screeching halt.

This was especially painful for Lorenza's mother, who saw her daughter being denied the opportunity for higher education that she so desperately wanted for her. The cycle of poverty was repeating itself. Lorenza says, *"I was crushed. I could see how much my mother was suffering, too, knowing that I would have to join the workforce without any degree or higher education."*

Enter TASH, which offered Lorenza a full scholarship including a stipend to cover secondary costs like meals, books, and uniforms.

Inspired by her mother's battle with diabetes, Lorenza chose to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She says, *"I chose a nursing career because I used to go to the hospital with my mother to manage her diabetes. That's where my passion and curiosity were born. It's also a very noble career, and I can help anyone from anywhere."*

Lorenza works hard in school. She maintains an average of about 85%, and she is on track to graduate with honors in the spring of 2026. Lorenza will be the first in her family to achieve a university degree.



Lorenza's extended family. Her father is on the far left, and her grandfather is on the far right.

Lorenza's heartfelt gratitude for the scholarship is clear: *"I will always be grateful to God for having placed people like you (TASH and its donors) in my path. You are a great support to me. May God grant you peace and a long life to continue this good work."*

Thanks to the generosity of its donors, TASH is making an incalculable impact on Lorenza's life and on all of the lives that she will touch throughout her professional career as a nurse.

May God bless you!



Pre-race runners pinning on their runner numbers.



Father Scott poses with the race winners



Runners begin to take their places prior to the start of the race



To make a donation, please scan the QR code, give online at www.tashinc.org, or make a check out to "Tash, Inc." and use the included envelope.

The 17th Annual Olé 5k was a huge success!

We set a record for participation (460 runners) and we raised

\$31,311.11

to support TASH's efforts in Oaxaca.

Thank you for your generous support!

The 18th Annual Olé 5k will take place on October 3, 2026.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!!