

The Tarahumara Times

June 2020 - Issue 6

Food for Community Work / Government Insurance Program

Food For Community Work Project: In the calendar year 2019 we managed to distribute 80 tons of corn and 16 tons of beans, fulfilling the requests from 45 communities. The beneficiary communities committed themselves to work projects for their own benefit. For example, planting fruit trees, developing water collection systems, cleaning plots and trenches to prevent the erosion of arable land, building and maintaining roads, and installing fences and removing stones to improve farmland to mention just a few. The primary goal for 2020 is to improve and expand the participation of those communities that take part in this program. This presents a considerable management challenge as we are operating with a bare minimum of staff. This program has become essential to assisting the Tarahumara during those difficult winter months and poor harvest periods.

In March of 2019, we were blessed with a large donation of three rail cars full of potatoes on behalf of the De la Vega family and other benefactors from Los Mochis, Sinaloa. These potatoes were distributed among various charitable institutions in the Sierra Tarahumara, among which are the Religious Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Poor. A significant portion of these potatoes were also distributed under the Food For Community Work program. Finally, we continue to implement the fruit tree program in the community of Barigúachi. These trees were donated by SEDUE, a local government agency. Despite the distance, we managed to have a regular presence in the Raramuchi community. We continue to support their projects that include building water tanks and hoses to irrigate already sown fruit trees. Experience has shown that investing in drought-tolerant crops (like fruit trees) that can provide a reliable harvest with a minimum of effort pays high dividends.

Government Insurance Program: We are constantly seeking the support from both public and private sources and were pleased to be selected by the *Trust for the Children of Mexico* from the Santander Bank. The qualification standards are quite rigorous so our challenge will be to professionalize our work within the limitations of the area where we live. This will allow us to be more efficient and to continue to participate in the program.

In 2019, the Popular Insurance Program was dismantled by the federal government. Although we will no longer have this governmental support we will continue to provide our services without interruption. Our patients continue to expect high quality and comprehensive medical services. Since October, we have contacted the corresponding authorities asking that they let us know the route to follow in order to establish a new agreement with INSABI. We hope to have something similar to what we had with the Popular Insurance Program. The information we have received so far in preparing this report is that the rules of operation are still being designed which means that private institutions like ours must wait for acceptance. Meanwhile, we will continue to train our staff to provide compassionate service to those people in poverty and exclusion.

With the help of our supporters around the world including the De la Vega family, SEDUE and everyone associated with the TCHF of Oregon we are well positioned to implement these most important projects. Most of us take access to food and water for our families for granted. Please remember that there are still many in our world, including the Tarahumara, who struggle to obtain even the most basic items. I am fortunate to have gotten to know this community and would like to express, on their behalf, their most sincere gratitude for your assistance.

Fr. Miguel, General Director

"Peter, do you love me feed my sheep."

John 21:17



tchforegon.org



Tarahumara
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
FUND
Of Oregon

COVID-19: Reflections from the Tarahumara Mission, Santa Teresita Complex in Creel, Mexico

Fr. Miguel Quintanilla, S.J.

I currently live in community with two other Jesuit colleagues, one of them is a human rights advisor and the other works with me at the Santa Teresita Complex. Since March 23rd, our rhythm of activities at the Santa Teresita Complex has changed. All religious services in the parish have been suspended since March 22nd. Creel is located 4 hrs. from the city of Chihuahua where there are already 30 confirmed cases and one person has died. Fortunately, no one with COVID-19 symptoms has yet presented to our medical unit. At the intercultural school in the town of Rejogochi, activities have been suspended since March 23rd. The Mission Crafts Store closed on April 6th at the direction of our local authorities and no tourists visited us during the Easter break.

The Santa Teresita Medical Unit has organized its medical and nursing staff in such a way that they work assisting people in quick consultations to avoid crowding in the waiting room. Those cases that are urgent or require deeper consultation are attended to in private or transferred to larger facilities like Chihuahua. Half of the staff works three days and the other half three days, alternating. We strive to provide loving service to vulnerable people which is still essential in our work and have implemented our contingency plan in coordination with health authorities in the area.

We have observed in Cd. De Chihuahua, Cuauhtémoc, San Juanito and Creel that there is little to no movement in the streets. However, we become aware of the great internal movement that passes through our hearts. We think that new challenges are coming to our apostolic work in the Sierra Tarahumara. The situation we are experiencing is extraordinary. The first thing that is obvious is the recognition of our vulnerability. COVID-19 came to reveal to all of us that we are definitely never safe and that death can be right around the corner.

This has left us reflecting deeply on what our Jesuit comrade, Father David Fernández, has shared with us. He tells us that in Mexico we have failed after thirty years of an economic model that increased national and international inequalities, deemphasized the sanctity of nature, dismantled social security systems, privatized health and education services, generated unprecedented migratory movements, made formal sustained employment precarious and threw the majority of the economically active population into a state of uncertainty.

We see with great sadness that the effect this virus has on the population is differentiated according to its location within the enormous economic and social inequality that currently exists. There is a wealthy minority but there are also millions of human beings living in poverty, others that are completely unemployed and more with tenuous jobs and wages in barely survivable conditions.

We believe that this is a special time; an opportunity to transform our minds and hearts towards the path of mercy. We have the opportunity to receive a gift from God; to look at other people not as rivals or problems to solve but as brothers to accompany. Pope Francis tells us that when he expresses the certainty that no one is saved alone and that we are all sailing together in a flimsy boat. May God be present in your families in a special way in these difficult times and may God bless you all.



"COVID-19: The challenge is not to infect and not to get infected. Stay at home."

Confined by a Collective Bombardment - Fr. Javier Melloni, S.J.

In this overwhelming situation that we - the world - are experiencing there is something new. We cannot speak singularly, because it affects us all: our families and community partners, the residents of our neighborhoods and cities, politicians and the difficult decisions they have to make, the entire health care system and all the other people whose services we take for granted in our anonymous society. We feel like brothers more than ever and we appreciate what we do - and can do - for each other.

Consider the case of Ignacio de Loyola, a soldier who injured his leg in the middle of battle and was forced into medical confinement for nine months. In the first weeks he struggled with pain and the fear of death. Then, something changed inside of him: a new man was born. Is this the opportunity that we are being given as a global society of brothers? Suddenly, we have been immobilized by a microscopic organism. The world that we believed invulnerable is not. Yet the only way that society will overcome this threat is to band together in common conviction to take care of ourselves, our families and our fellow man on the other side of the planet.

Ignacio needed time to understand what had befallen him. After he dealt with the pain from his wounds he sought to entertain himself to pass the time and was finally comforted by the word of God. We have many tools to turn this collective confinement into a shared retreat; into communal exercises of discernment and conversion. There are many elements that are at stake. Saint Ignatius began to name them on his convalescent bed in Loyola, but only after he was abruptly immobilized. He wouldn't have done it on his own.

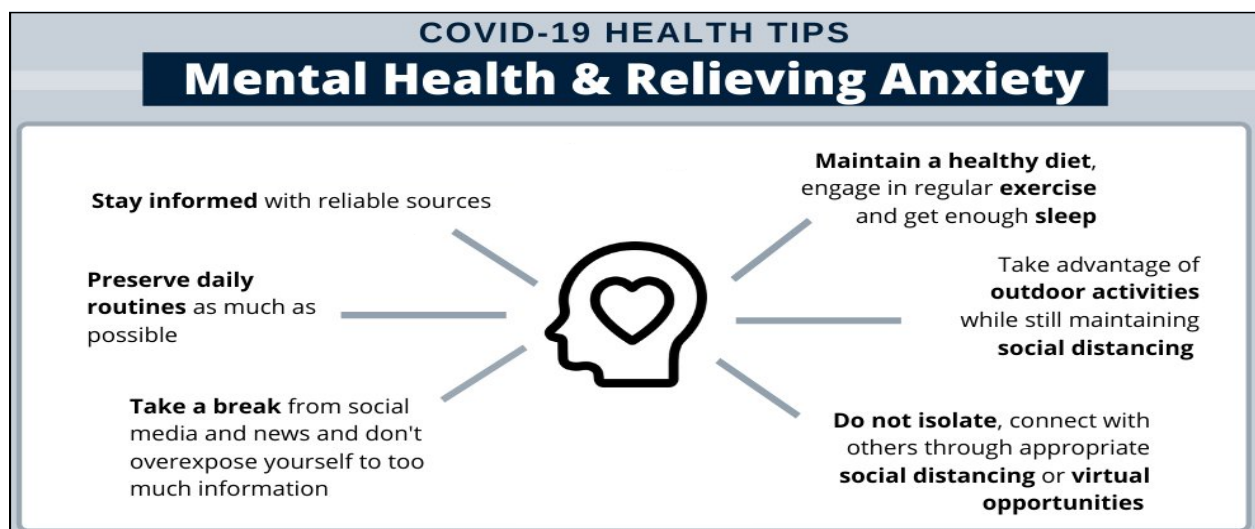
Blessed is confinement if it helps us to receive knowledge that we did not have. More than ever we need each other now. The light of one is light for us all.



Javier Melloni Ribas was born in Barcelona in 1962, the son of an Italian father and a Catalan mother. He entered the Society of Jesus when he was 18 years old. He was ordained as a Jesuit priest, and is also an anthropologist, theologian, and phenomenologist of religion. Regular visits to India have allowed him to reflect on elements of Hindu mystique in contemplation of Christianity. A Jesuit and student of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, he also has an extensive knowledge of the texts of the other major religions. In his task as a spiritual companion he integrates elements from these various traditions in his study and view of Christianity.

He is a member of Cristianisme i Justícia, professor of Spiritual Theology at the Faculty of Theology of Catalonia as well as at the Institute of Fundamental Theology in Sant Cugat where his specialty subjects are interreligious dialogue and comparative mysticism.

His theoretical foundation is complex insofar as it includes factors that have to do with the anthropological, the sociological, the epistemological and the theological. In summary, interreligious dialogue accomplishes two main goals: one's religious confession is only one possible way to access the Mystery and with that reality, that people can open themselves to the spiritual wealth of humanity.



If you are like John and me, you have been self-quarantined since the beginning of this COVID-19 pandemic. It is an overwhelming and sad time that has impacted many we know and many more we don't in our community and around the world. With patience and faith, we shall overcome this. In addition to the medical consequence of this pandemic, the world financial markets are also experiencing significant volatility. Unfortunately, this has also affected our Endowment Fund. We are seeing signs of recovery and are confident that the markets will recover. Mark Gaskill, our investment officer at MKG Financial, has issued the following statement:

"Hello, everyone. I hope you are all healthy and doing well. As you are aware, the markets were hit hard with the negative global effects of the COVID-19 virus as investors watched their portfolios decline. Fortunately, over the last month we have seen the market begin to recover and investments begin to find solid ground. The Endowment Fund was not immune in this chaos but there are a few things I wanted to share with you. While the Fund declined with other investors in the fall it has also benefited from the diversification within the portfolio. And finally, while seeing equity positions being pulled down during the decline, we are watching the recovery unfold and hold leading positions, such as in Amazon and Netflix, that are also benefiting in today's constrained consumer activities and have risen in the market beyond just the recovery that is taking place. While we wish you well in staying healthy, we wish your investments a healthy return as well".

A Brief History of the TCHF / Creel, Chihuahua, Mexico

The Tarahumara Children's Hospital Fund (TCHF) consists of three separate groups working together to support the Tarahumara Mission in the Copper Canyon of Mexico. These groups are located in Michigan, Louisiana and Oregon. The Mission headquarters is based in Creel, Chihuahua, Mexico with Fr. Miguel Quintanilla, S.J., serving as General Director since March of 2015. Long-time advisor and liaison Fr. David Ungerleider, S.J., is based in Tijuana, MX and works closely with Fr. Miguel to coordinate the activities of the U.S.-based groups with the Jesuit Provincial Authority.

Our purpose is to raise money and awareness in the United States to support vital services provided to the Tarahumara Indians in the Copper Canyon region of Mexico. A small hospital was opened in 1979 that has 75 beds, 2/3 for children. A "Water for Life" initiative began in 2015 is currently in the process of testing, remediating and installing new clean and sustainable wells. A boarding school teaches children about their own culture and language, the Spanish language and teaches them skills to make a living as farmers, craftsmen, and teachers of their people. In recent years, outdated and obsolescent oxygen generating and X-Ray equipment has been replaced as well as heavily used ambulances and rehabilitative playground equipment.

The Tarahumara people do not have the means to pay for these services themselves. The Mission must rely on the support of foundations and individuals who recognize the importance of both preserving a cultural heritage and ensuring the healthy future of a tribal community. Fr. Miguel continues the belief of "helping people help themselves" put forth by Fr. Verplancken back in the 1960's. The Mission does not just "hand out" charity today: It trains and uplifts the Indian people so that they can provide for themselves tomorrow.

Creel, Chihuahua, Mexico: Creel is a town in the Sierra Tarahumara (part of the Sierra Madre Occidental) of the Mexican state of Chihuahua, located 109 miles to the southwest of the state capital Chihuahua City. At the census of 2010 it had a population of 5,026 inhabitants (down from 5,334 in 2005).

Near Creel is Divisadero, perhaps the best-known overlook of the "Three Canyons" area of the Copper Canyon, as well as Basaseachic Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in Mexico. Creel was historically a logging town, although tourism has become the primary industry over the last 25 years. Today, there are many hotels, restaurants and a number of tours down into the canyons.



National Provincial View of Chihuahua



Regional City View of Creel

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Please support our Amazon Smile program by logging in with the following link when shopping. All purchases initiated through this portal will generate a donation to the Mission.

Thank you for your support.

smile.amazon.com/ch/46-1411759

Published by the TCHF of Oregon

14009 S.E. Matilda Drive, Milwaukie, OR, 97267 (USA)

Phone: 503-659-4342 / Fax: 503-652-5991

Email: pyjb@comcast.net

Web: tchforegon.org

John Brockamp (Pres) / Peggy Brockamp (Sec) / Paul Kester (Treas)

Fr. Miguel Quintanilla, S.J. - General Director

Fr. David Ungerleider, S.J. - Liaison and Advisor

Average Temperatures / Precipitation in Creel in Jun:

High Temp 80 F / Low Temp 45 F / 2.75 Inches

FOR INFORMATION ON CREEL AND THE COPPER CANYON:

visitcoppercanyon.com/

visitmexico.com/en/main-destinations/chihuahua/creel

mexonline.com/index.htm