

# La Semilla

the hope  
of the harvest is in the seed

Spring 2021

## THAT JOY-FILLED DISCOVERY OF LOVE AT WORK

— CARLOS

After weeks of testing and doctors' appointments for my wife's health, we received the news that her problem was cancer, a very aggressive cancer. Ana would have to receive daily treatments for several

weeks running in Monterey, over two hour's distance from our home.

Just at this time I had been very aware of the Lord Jesus' unmistakable presence, touching my

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This year's Holy Week Retreat was limited to women only. These four gals had already lived a come-and-see for a month with older single women, so they were primed. How did it turn out? Learn some more details on page 7.



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heart with His love, with healing. Through no fault of my own, I was experiencing mercy so moving— even jarring— yet so tender ... One day as I walked across a baseball field very near our house, the Lord's touch left me literally double over and crying on the infield. Did anyone see me? Somewhere in the far recesses of my consciousness I was embarrassed. But front and center I knew Jesus was enveloping me, strengthening me. How can a man, unable to stand up, unable to control his tears, ever consider that he is being strengthened? As I made my way home, the Lord said something very particular, "We will speak again at 5:00 in the morning." I did not doubt that word until the alarm rang the next day, 5:00 on Saturday— my day off. I was exhausted and sure that I must have been mistaken. But I couldn't get back to sleep. I dressed, put on my shoes, and ended up at the adoration chapel which had been beckoning me

## In this Issue

*The fruit of the Eucharist in our lives is opened up in this Summer 2021 issue of La Semilla.*

- page 1 Carlos details how he has seen the Lord forming and deepening his discipleship in many ways and in several areas of his life, through the Eucharist. He calls it, *That Joy-filled Discovery of Love at Work.*
- page 4 Some of our current needs in the mission.
- page 9 *Sharing the Truth of Love:* Fr. Tim remembers a sick call and the perspective it opened up on *how we receive the Eucharist, as well as to what end we receive.*

for several weeks.

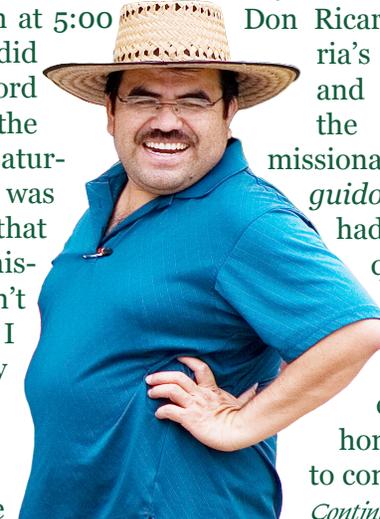
Here I have to interrupt my history with what had occurred three years earlier. Our family was invited to dinner at

Don Ricardo and Doña Maria's house (i.e., Dick and Maureen Herman, the founders of our missionary movement, *Seguidores de la Cruz*). I

had one overarching question for Ricardo, "How did they know they were to leave everything— their

home and country and to come here, to this spe-

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Continued from page 2.

specific place?”. His reply, “You hear the Lord speaking in your heart”. I thought to myself, this will be good... But he said no more, just repeated those several words. My wife remembers how disappointed I was. We spoke of it on the drive home. Why couldn't he say more, give more to grab on to? But “disappointment” is incorrect—looking back now I know I misspoke. “Longing”, deep longing, is what I was experiencing without recognizing it.

Then about three years later, the only other very personal contact which we had with Don Ricardo, before he died, occurred when we got switched (unsolicited on our part) into his Sunday morning, 8-week course, entitled *Living the Eucharist* (“Eucharist” here stands for the whole Mass; e.g., the Eucharist was celebrated at 9:00am). We were so privileged to take this course from the very author. All of that was three years prior.

And now, as I look back, indeed I was hearing the Lord in my heart— even without consciously recalling my specific question and that longing. We had so many

decisions to make, changes of priorities as we prepared for extended therapy sessions for my wife.

She would be coming home for weekends. We would try (and succeed) to continue taking courses at the mission. But we had to pull back from pursuing our decision to be trained as leaders in *Semguidores de la Cruz*. We were making so many adjustments. I was taking care of our three daughters for the first time ever, without Ana's presence.

Some eight months after her treatments, and after Ana received a healing touch from the Lord Jesus, very specifically in a prayer session, we were asked to sign up for a time to help cover

*It is before all else the joy-filled discovery of love at work in the hearts of those who accept the Lord's gift.*

*Pope John Paul II stated that the moral life "has the value of a 'spiritual worship' (Rom 12:1; cf. Phil 3:3), flowing from and nourished by that inexhaustible source of holiness and glorification of God which is found in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. ...This appeal to the moral value of spiritual worship should not be interpreted in a merely moralistic way. It is before all else the joy-filled discovery of love at work in the hearts of those who accept the Lord's gift, abandon themselves to him and thus find true freedom. The moral transformation implicit in the new worship instituted by Christ is a heartfelt yearning to respond to the Lord's love with one's whole being, while remaining ever conscious of one's own weakness.*

*- Benedict XVI. Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis, (22 Feb 2007): no. 82.*

# Mission Needs

## The School

- Two rooms serving double duty as classrooms and residence are in need of mini-split air conditioners. If you can help us each room will require \$175.

## Grounds & Maintenance

- A long lasting professional pole saw and trimmer will cost us \$300.
- Two bow saw blades are needed at \$15 each.

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## Vocational Training

- Four army issue cots- \$160 each- will allow us to bring *Solteros* onto the campus at *El Rancho Nazaret* for Come-and-see training.

## Supplies

- After serving for 18 months it is time to retire and replace the 15 brooms and 15 mops which owe us nothing. All items are \$15 each.

You can DONATE on line at our website: <<socmission.org>>. At the top of any page press "HOW YOU CAN HELP"

*Please consider whether you can contribute to the mis-*

perpetual adoration. The pastor hoped the parish could cover 24/7, so to establish that Sacramental presence. Saturday mornings were our go-to-time, our three daughters managing to get launched on their own.

We signed up for 6:00am and went just one time. There were many people pres-

ent, the atmosphere was just not right for my wife or for me. Then it dawned on me— Duhhh! “We’ll speak at 5:00am.” I had been afraid to sign up earlier, guarding my sleep on my day off. I quickly adjusted our commitment to 5:00 am. And it dawned on me more deeply, just what Don Ricardo had coun-

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Carlos mentions a time when they studied the course taught by Don Ricardo. This shot captures a moment from that time period, with Ana, his wife.

seled. I was hearing the Lord in my heart. Not perfectly, only by fits and starts. No problem, just need some repentance and forgiveness... We were following the Lord. He had even told my wife to pick up and live elsewhere in a specific place, for a specific amount of time. We heard and obeyed, and He healed her. (The healing has been confirmed several times by her doctors. Up to now she is cancer free.) My deep longing has not been eliminated but transformed to thirst for more of Jesus' life, and His leading us personally as Good Shepherd.

I was asked to mention the fruit of the Eucharist in my life, in

our life as a family. I had to leave out so many inspiring instances and rich details. Let me mention just one more. Our oldest, Maria Fernanda, asked several times, asked insistently, whether she also could come to adoration on Saturday mornings. But this wasn't possible, as she has to babysit the two younger girls. The Lord showed us a solution. All of us, parents and three daughters, make a Eucharistic holy hour together on Sunday mornings at 7:00 before Mass.



## SHARING THE TRUTH OF LOVE

— by Fr. Tim

When you preside at a funeral or make a sick call in my parish (in Mexico) it is most often at the house where the family is gathered, along with relatives and neighbors. You do well to take a “sounding” early in your visit. Right away, greeting everyone with some formal liturgical greetings, the response will determine how you speak and tailor your message going forward.

“The Lord be with you...” If only three people, out of thirty-five present, know the response, you should announce the *kerygma*<sup>1</sup> in context and not elaborate much else. “O Mary conceived without sin...” If nearly everyone responds you can speak about

the *kerygma* and also expand into another area: e.g., the Sacraments; the Year of St Joseph; the *domestic church*; etc.

Recently I anointed, Clara, a woman who was quite near to dying; though no longer able to speak, she could still swallow a little food and water. I helped her confess, with everyone present, prompting her to respond without words, in her heart, asking forgiveness for her sins. Her

1. *kerygma* - the basic and simple Gospel proclamation; i.e., we are saved from sin and eternal death by the death, resurrection, ascension and glorification of Jesus Christ.

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The Aguilas (“Eagles” of the junior division; we also have two older divisional teams) have been playing throughout the COVID tightened security, since outdoor recreation has enjoyed more freedom from restrictions. They are beneficiaries of four new soccer nets donated by a generous patron from the appeal of the last Semilla issue. We also received two new large coffee makers from another generous patron. More Mission Needs are detailed on page 4.



Left-right: Monserrat, Melissa, Valeria, Belen; the same culprits you saw on the front page. They returned, along with several other young ladies, for the Holy Week Retreat and were surprised how the Lord touched their hearts.

### HOLY WEEK RETREAT

With the COVID-19 restrictions and the rains that fell all week, our anual Holy Week retreat for *Solteros* (Single Men & Women's Group) was destined to suffer major setbacks. Usually we take men and women to an outlying, neglected chapel, or even to a rural diocese, as missionaries.

This year would be restricted to single women, and we would be living at *El Rancho Nazaret*, eliminating the rich, mission experiences of the event. Yet, the Lord is so faithful, this year's retreat was the most powerful we remember, in terms of how hearts were changed and friendships were

solidified. The women showed amazing openness to the Holy Spirit, who refused to be outdone. Those who made the retreat were principally the younger *solteras* who had previously made a *come-and-see* experience, living with the established women's household for a month. They returned with enthusiasm and faith-filled expectancies for how the Lord could work in their lives. Yet, Denise (Yohali's sister) was brand new, her first event ever with *Seguidores de la Cruz*. Her parting comment, "I now have sisters in the Lord".

Facing page, top: left to right, Melissa, Yohali and Monserrat hand-making greeting cards to sell in order to help finance their come-and-see month. Having received a scholarship to afford the month's expences, they are softening the cost through their handicrafts. Bottom photo: all participants of the Holy Week Retreat except the photographer, Yohali. Left to right: Chabelita, Sofia; on the central stairs, clockwise from top: Melissa, Dennise, Valeria, Dulce, Monserrat. Right three, descending: Maria Fernanda, Sr. Amada, Belen.



Significantly, the Synod Fathers stated that, “the Christian faithful need a fuller understanding of the relationship between the Eucharist and their daily lives. Eucharistic spirituality is not just participation in Mass and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It embraces the whole of life... Hence the Eucharist, as the source and summit of the Church’s life and *mission*, must be translated into spirituality, into a life lived “according to the Spirit” (Rom 8:4ff.; cf. Gal 5:16,25). - Benedict XVI. Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, (22 Feb 2007): no. 77.

Emphasis on the intrinsic relationship between the Eucharist and mission also leads to a rediscovery of the ultimate content of our proclamation. The more ardent the love for the Eucharist in the hearts of the Christian people, the more clearly will they recognize the goal of all mission: to bring Christ to others. Not just a theory or a way of life inspired by Christ, but the gift of his very person. *Anyone who has not shared the truth of love with his brothers and sisters has not yet given enough.*  
- Benedict XVI. *Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis*, (22 Feb 2007): no. 86.

*Continued from page 6.*

family— three generations of relatives— and many neighbors were gathered to overflowing in and outside doors and windows of the small house. An impressive majority knew the liturgical responses to my invocations. Young kids with hair dyed purple and green, mothers with shoulders and legs tattooed, were nearly unanimous and attentive in responding correctly. Most of the men were still at work.

Everyone present could hear me from my place next to the elderly Clara’s bed. On my right was a daughter, Elsa— early thirties, whose youngest children were snuggling next to her. She held the holy oils as I read and turned pages leading up to the anointing. Afterwards, when it came time for receiving Communion, I broke off a morsel, one-fourth the size of a slivered almond, and asked who could help the sick woman

to receive the host. (The woman had no chance of understanding my poor Spanish and horrendous accent, especially muffled through a facemask.) Elsa kicked off her flipflops, stepped up on the mattress, straddle-stepped over her mother and knelt on an elevated desk next to the far side of the bed. This was apparently a place familiar to her for access to feeding her mother. She gently coaxed her mother and deftly used her free hand to open her mother’s mostly unresponsive mouth for the *viaticum*. Observing the way she received Communion was not readily recognized as reverent, but Clara was on her way to Eternity.

Having lived a year of COVID, we have been more finely-tuned into *how* we receive Communion. Bishops and others have imposed protocols which mandated receiving in the hands, remaining standing, purifying the hands, and other indications which were at very least distracting; for some, spiritually unnerving. Even a cursory glance at 1 Cor 11:17ff brings home the importance of *how* we receive as crucial.

*Anyone who has not shared the truth of love with his brothers and sisters has not yet given enough.*

The *why* and *what for* of receiving Communion was highlighted in the Gospel readings during Easter. In John 6, the Bread of Life discourse, Jesus insists on *why* we need the nourishment that without which we die, and for those who receive brings about eternal life. And *for what purpose* we receive the Eucharist— to abide in

Christ, which is necessary if we are to bear fruit, is elaborated in Jn 15. *He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing* (Jn 15:4-5).

Pope Benedict XVI calls our attention to the Sacraments of mission<sup>2</sup>. Of course each Sacrament, in its own way, strengthens us to carry on the mission of Christ in the world today, and finds its source and summit in

2. Cf. Benedict XVI, *Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis*, (22 Feb. 2007): nos. 23-29. The Sacraments of mission— Holy Orders & Matrimony; the Sacraments of initiation— Baptism, Holy Eucharist & Confirmation; the Sacraments of healing— Confession & Anointing of the sick.

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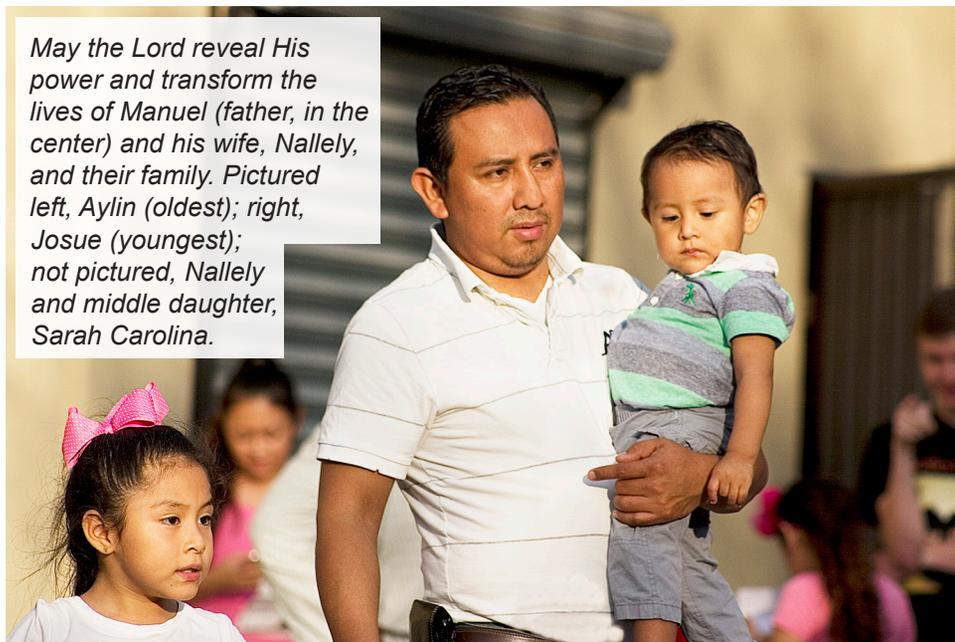


*Sisters, inadvertently captured in a prototypical moment. Jeiny (left) expressing hope, and Jasmin projecting fear and bewilderment, though she is not generally so glum. The Eucharist strengthens us to live a life according to the Holy Spirit.*

*They should cultivate a desire that the Eucharist have an ever deeper effect on their daily lives, making them convincing witnesses in the workplace and in society at large. I encourage families in particular to draw inspiration and strength from this sacrament. The love between man and woman, openness to life, and the raising of children are privileged spheres in which the Eucharist can reveal its power to transform life and give it its full meaning.*

- Benedict XVI. Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, (22 Feb 2007): no. 79.

May the Lord reveal His power and transform the lives of Manuel (father, in the center) and his wife, Nallely, and their family. Pictured left, Aylin (oldest); right, Josue (youngest); not pictured, Nallely and middle daughter, Sarah Carolina.



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the Eucharist. Still, Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes the vital connection of the Eucharist with Matrimony and Holy Orders. If we are to bear fruit— fruit which endures to eternal life— in the Church’s mission, intrinsic to these two Sacraments, we must abide in Christ. *He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him* (Jn 6:56).

For Holy Orders, the Pope points to the need for a sincere gift of self on the part of the priest

for the Church’s benefit. He illuminates three moments in particular that the fruitfulness demanded of the priest is far beyond his personal ego and his own resources: when presiding at Mass *in persona Christi*; in his expression of celibacy as a nuptial, self-giving to the Bride of Christ; and in the pastoral care of vocations. While for those who share the Sacrament of Matrimony, Benedict emphasizes the Eucharist as the sacrament of charity which they continually express. They show to their children (as the *do-*

*mestic church*), to the Church and to the world, the indissolubility to which all true love necessarily aspires. As the Catechism states (¶ 1644):

Spouses are called to grow continually in their communion through day-to-day fidelity to their marriage promise of total mutual self-giving. This human communion is confirmed, purified, and completed by communion in Jesus Christ, given through the sacrament of Matrimony. It is deepened by lives of the common faith and by the Eucharist received together.

We would do well to consider, contemplate, and ask the Lord to form us in receiving the Eucharist so that we can complete His agenda as His missionary disciples. COVID-19 compounds a peren-

nial problem of our tendency to be withdrawn and isolated in our spirituality and in our Christian life.

Clara was half fighting, half complaining, as she was prompted to receive the *viaticum*. Attending her dying mother, Elsa’s *derrière* was highest part of her profile, her face bent down to her mother’s own waning countenance, her left hand caressing Clara’s cheek. After tenderly forcing the mouth to open and administering some water from a syringe, she kissed Clara and solemnly declared, “You’re good to go, Mom”.

Not a posture of reverence, not even a pretense of elegance, but sometimes the *why* and the *wherefore* takes precedence over the *how*, when we give and receive Jesus, our Sovereign Lord.



Diego (right) welcomes newcomer, Sergio, just before the setup for Mass begins. In Mexico we are still restricted significantly in order to ward off contagion of the virus. Cases are spiking as of this printing in early June. Please pray for everyone here.