

Dear St. Alexander parishioners,

As some of you already know, I was recently away from the office. From the middle of January until the beginning of February, I was working remotely while I was with my family in California to assist with caring for my mother, who was in delicate health due to a tumor which was detected last October.

In the early morning of Wednesday, March 4, I received a call from my sister informing me that my mother was in her final moments. I quickly contacted Fr. David to let him know about the situation and my need for emergency leave to go to California to be at the side of my mother and my family. My mother, Reyna Rocha de Soto, left for her encounter with our heavenly father on the morning of March 6. God allowed her to be surrounded by her husband, children and close family members in her final days. God gave me the gift of being with her when she went.

As a family, we had many lovely and intimate moments with my beautiful mother: moments of great unity and support and many expressions of affection. At the vigil service we could not fit in the chapel which holds 200 people. The church, with a capacity of 1000 people, was more than half full. I share this to give you a small glimpse of who my mother was. She was a woman of deep faith, a wife and mother fully devoted to her vocation. She was a mother not afraid to discipline us, making it clear who was in charge at home, always with loving arms and entrusting us to God. She led us very faithfully to all of our sacramental preparation, but always showed us faith more with deeds than with words.

She welcomed so many people to our home, whether to offer them a meal, an ear to listen and offer friendship, or even a time to live with us while they established themselves. She was very active in our parish and was even the priests' cook for several years. There she was adopted by many as a mother, aunt, grandmother, sister; a family member for those who saw in her that loving face and human warmth.

I have had and continue to have moments of sadness, missing simple things like picking up the phone to call her. But also, we have as a family the gift of the peace she gave to us, letting us know not to be afraid, as her life and ours are in the hands of our creator and our purpose is to return to Him. She left us with the hope that our life does not end here, but that, just like in this time of Lent in which we find ourselves, it is a time of preparation to come to celebrate the resurrection and gather together again someday in the presence of our Lord.

I want to thank you for your prayers for my mother, for me and for my family. Thank you also to the parish staff for their understanding and support during these moments I had to face. It is a great blessing to work with a team and a shepherd who supports us. My heart is full of gratitude. May God bless you.

Rest in peace, +Reyna Rocha de Soto (3/6/2020).

Sincerely,

Ermelinda Soto-Avalos

Office Manager, San Alejandro