

Pastor's Notes: Interview with Corinne Henderson of La Paz Chattanooga - Part 2 of 2

April 25, 2021

On Mar. 18, 2021, I interviewed Corinne Henderson, Basilica parishioner and board member of La Paz Chattanooga. The full interview can be found on the Basilica's website along with my Pastor's Notes for April 18 and 25, 2021, accessible at stspeterandpaulbasilica.com/pastors-notes.



Fr. Carter: What is your involvement with La Paz?

Corinne Henderson: I'm the Treasurer of the board because I'm an accountant. That's how I can help. Whenever I say yes to doing nonprofit work, I go read the organization's federal 990, because I want to make sure that the money is being appropriately handled. And I was blown away when I saw how many folks are served in Chattanooga, with so few dollars, and so few employees at La Paz. Their work is herculean, and the work that they did in 2020 - it's beyond comprehension how much they did with so little.

Fr. Carter: That's awesome. Can you talk about some of the things that La Paz has done or anything it does do?

Corinne Henderson: This is interesting. During COVID, organizations that were able to quickly pivot and serve the needy are really impressive to me. And La Paz - because it is probably the biggest Latino immigrant organization in Chattanooga - they were able to take money that the state offered, money that the Community Foundation offered, and they were the portal to get it to the people, to pay rent, buy food, medicine, whatever that thing was. Rapid response. And so that's what they did. During COVID - you know, the city of Chattanooga is trying to get all of the COVID information out - and La Paz was there to help them do that in Spanish.

Fr. Carter: So not only information, but they also had boots on the ground, like you said, and did frontline work helping people to stay in their homes, keep the lights on, and have the means necessary to live healthy lives. How does La Paz relate to faith-based organizations like our church and our parishioners? How does it have impact on our parishioners?

Corinne Henderson: Our parishioners receive help, information, services. I can tell you that La Paz partners with a lot of organizations, including faith-based ones, just to get the help to the people that need it.

Fr. Carter: Awesome. Where would somebody go to get more information about La Paz?

Corinne Henderson: Right now, online. La Paz is in the process right now of renovating a building that they acquired on Willow Street in Highland Park, and so really for the first time in the 17-year existence, the space that they are going to have that can be a magnet for the community is going to be fantastic. I don't know how many more months of construction we have. We did a groundbreaking. I believe it was in the summer. It's located near the soccer fields that are on Willow Street in Highland Park. So eventually folks will be able to go there, but for now, it's during this COVID time it's going to be online or a phone call.

Fr. Carter: Awesome. So just perusing the website, I'm seeing who's involved, I'm seeing their different areas of expertise, where they're where they're helping people, community education, health services, and, of course - just popped up - the COVID-19 issue. And it seems like that's very prominent right now, helping people to get safe and affordable vaccinations and care during this time of pandemic.

Corinne Henderson: They do a lot of testing. La Paz partnered with Clinica Medicos and other organizations. They tested a lot of people, and I know Clinica Medicos has vaccinations now. You can call and get a vaccination.

Fr. Carter: Are you also involved in Clinica Medicos?

Corinne Henderson: No, Kelly Arnold, *la doctora*, is the one that introduced me to La Paz. She has been on the board and she is such a champion for our Latino brothers and sisters and has a big heart. She is the one that introduced me to La Paz initially.

Fr. Carter: Awesome. Corinne, thank you so much for sitting with us and tell us about the work of La Paz, and thank you for being involved in it and having that heart of solidarity which comes from our Catholic faith of knowing that our brothers and sisters are one in the faith, and having that connection with your fellow Christian people, and doing what you can to bring the peace of God to the world.

Corinne Henderson: I appreciate you asking me and letting me talk about La Paz, because they are angels on this earth, the work they do.

Fr. Carter: Beautiful. What a good testament to leave on, then. God bless you.

Corinne Henderson: Thank you.

The full video and transcript of the interview are posted on the Basilica's website. To find out more or volunteer with La Paz Chattanooga, visit <https://www.lapazchattanooga.org/>, call (423) 624-8414 or text (423) 401-0880.