

# La Paz Chattanooga

An Interview with

Very Rev. David Carter, JCL, JV, Pastor and Rector of the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul  
and  
Corinne Henderson, Board Member of La Paz Chattanooga

March 18, 2021

## Full Transcript of Interview

*On Mar. 18, 2021, Fr. Carter 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 Fr. Carter's Pastor's Notes for April 18 and 25, 2021, accessible at [stspeterandpaulbasilica.com/pastors-notes](http://stspeterandpaulbasilica.com/pastors-notes).*

### Fr. David Carter

Welcome to this interview with Corinne Henderson. She is a longtime parishioner here at the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul. She is our Finance Council Chair. And she also has a great love for our Hispanic community. I see her often at the Spanish Masses. And she is a board member for an organization here in Chattanooga called La Paz Chattanooga. First of all, Corrine, welcome.

### Corinne Henderson

Thank you. I appreciate it. I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to talk about La Paz.

### Fr. David Carter

And thank you for all you do. And I see that little image of the Basilica that you had made, behind [you]. That's awesome, a great work of art.

### Corinne Henderson

Also by an immigrant to Chattanooga, from Russia.

### Fr. David Carter

That's pretty awesome. Maybe we'll have another interview about that. Tell me, what is La Paz?

### Corinne Henderson

When I first was introduced to it, I asked the same question, and I'm not sure that I can fully answer it right now. But La Paz is an organization that works to empower our Latino - largely immigrant - population. And they really want to help the folks in that part of our community become leaders, and to thrive in Chattanooga.

### Fr. David Carter

I know the full name was La Paz de Dios, is that correct?

**Corinne Henderson**

Yes. And it still is La Paz de Dios, Inc, The Peace of God. I believe that the leaders that started La Paz 17 years ago - quite a few of them - were from faith-based organizations.

**Fr. David Carter**

What was the inspiration for La Paz de Dios?

**Corinne Henderson**

The immigrant population -the Latin American population - was being taken advantage of. And so that's my understanding of why it was started. And it's interesting that in 2020, with all of the COVID stuff, and then in particular, the tornadoes that happened in East Brainerd, there were a lot of folks being taken advantage of. And so La Paz was able to step in and help; not just physically, but legally help folks in that respect.

**Fr. David Carter**

So it's sort of an advocacy group, too.

**Corinne Henderson**

Definitely advocacy. And also boots-on-the-ground physically. At the Basilica, too, during the tornado, you had a lot of diapers and food and clothing. And La Paz has done that, too: helped families get the things physically that they need, as well as the social service things they need. So, yes.

**Fr. David Carter**

And I know that Sister Imelda with our Hispanic community has partnered very well with the work of La Paz, that we are arm and arm with a lot of what they do.

**Corinne Henderson**

Right. She's a hero of La Paz. They put out the HEROES publication, and she was featured in it. And it is beautiful, her words in that interview.

**Fr. David Carter**

Absolutely. And we'll put a link to that Chattanooga publication and what all was there. And then also in the past, La Paz Chattanooga gave the Latino Leadership Awards, and Sister Celia Sanchez, who was the predecessor of Sister Imelda, had received one of the Latino Leaders Awards, but probably about six or seven years ago.

**Corinne Henderson**

Yes. I believe that a lot of the members of our parish receive services. A lot of them are educational, or they have a lot of informational sessions that help folks that are immigrants. Like banking - how do you navigate the banking system here? Just really practical things. A lot of our members of our parish are able to take advantage of those services.

**Fr. David Carter**

Information is a huge thing. And knowing the how-to when you're in a foreign land and don't know how things work. That's power.

**Corinne Henderson**

I thought about you living in Rome and having to navigate the Italian services. And I wanted to share that I love the language. And the first time that probably 5, 6, 7 years ago that I went to the Spanish Mass in our church, a church where I was baptized and where I am completely comfortable, and I was the only Anglo person in the building. And how I felt - it gave me a kernel, a grain of sand, bit of understanding of what it would feel like to be an immigrant in this city. But right when I walk out the door of the Basilica, I'm back in my familiar in my homeland.

When I was asked to serve with La Paz, I kept saying no, because I thought my plate was too full. And when I finally did say yes, I am so glad that I did. Because I've gotten a lot of blessings from being able to be one of the few Anglo participants in all of our Spanish celebrations at the parish.

**Fr. David Carter**

What you're describing there is what the Catholic Church calls solidarity. And it's one of the principles of the Catholic social teaching. So you're living it out. You experienced it in your heart, and you responded, in your in your call, your baptismal call for holiness. That's awesome. Thanks.

**Corinne Henderson**

And I also appreciate the name of the capital campaign, because that really resonates with me, too. Because Saints Peter and Paul is for every single person that comes without respect to where we were born, or the color of our skin, or our native language.

**Fr. David Carter**

Corinne is referring to our Under One Roof capital campaign to preserve the historical building that is the Basilica. We need lots of upgrades and renovations, including a new roof. If you'd like to donate to the Under One Roof campaign, we'll put a link in this interview also for you to do so. So, 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. David 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. David 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. David Carter**

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

**Corinne Henderson**

Right now, online. If you'll share the links and the information.... 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 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. David 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. David 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. David 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 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. David Carter**

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

**Corinne Henderson**

Thank you.

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**For more information:**

*The full video of the interview is available on the [Basilica's website](https://stspeterandpaulbasilica.com), <https://stspeterandpaulbasilica.com>.*

*Visit La Paz Chattanooga at <https://www.lapazchattanooga.org/>, call (423) 624-8414 or text (423) 401-0880.*

*Read about the La Paz Chattanooga HEROES award given to Sister Imelda Quechol, the Basilica's Hispanic Ministry Coordinator, here: <http://www.stspeterandpaulbasilica.com/news/sister-imelda-honored-with-lapaz-heroes-award>*

*Find out more about the Basilica's [Under One Roof campaign](https://stspeterandpaulbasilica.com/stewardship) at <https://stspeterandpaulbasilica.com/stewardship>*