

„For life is a gift we receive only when we give ourselves away, and our deepest joy comes from saying yes to love, without ifs and buts. As Jesus did for us”

/Pope Francis, Palm Sunday homily, April 5th 2020/

When we think about the recent coronavirus pandemics we see a lot of issues across the whole globe: starting from threats, risk, uncertainties, through dedication and service of so many to so many, we see people who suddenly received more time to be spent in their homes and we see others who have much less time mainly because of staying at their homes, we had to face new routines, plenty of questions, emotions, anxieties and...luckily hope.

Hope which came with so many initiatives which were born ad hoc, just to help, to bring Christian charity, to overcome selfishness and to serve others. One of such initiatives established in the San Francisco Bay Area was an initiative of sewing home-made masks to be delivered to the first line responders and people who work in medical facilities but who, at that time, were deprived of such safety measures. I first read about it on Facebook as a message from my friend whose husband is a nurse and her kids go to the class with my daughter. She asked if there is anyone willing to help with the masks in our small town of Livermore. I signed up immediately and later I thought: but how am I going to do it? I don't have any fabrics nor sewing machine and last but definitely not least I don't have any sewing experience ☺ But instead of focusing on what I don't have I started to think quickly what I have. Friends. A lot of them. So I quickly texted a few, then I send a message to the group of Toddler Moms with whom I have a monthly talks in my apartment and I asked if anyone is eager to help. Believe it or not just in a few days we were able to establish a well-organized group which consisted of a team of cutters (cutting fabrics for mask pieces), pressers (people pressing the fabrics so it will be easier to sew them) and seamstresses. It was all possible to the generosity of my dear friend Sheila who immediately responded to my appeal with a huge donation of beautiful cotton fabrics she was storing during the years she was practicing her sewing hobby. Because of that we were able to start immediately.

The whole idea required a lot of flexibility – all women involved, apart from one high school girl, are wives (and almost all husbands at that time were working from home) and most of them are moms (in sum we have 17 kids, in majority toddlers, and one eight months pregnancy which happens to be mine). I tried to make it easier for them so I was washing and drying fabrics, cutting them and dropping them off as well as picking them up and later delivering the masks to our coordinator. What was especially beautiful in this initiative was that the persons involved started to send each other prayers they were listening during cutting, pressing or sewing. So many offerings have been made! And during our work few more joined – in our area but also in other locations like my friend Sue from Concord whom I just put in contact with somebody who coordinated the efforts in her geographical area.

Summing up, no matter the circumstances in life the most precious resource we at the same time have and always lack is time. So finding time to serve other people amidst pandemics while at the same time serving God and our families was one of the most powerful experience I had. And seeing photos of our daughters who helped a lot with all the activities

showed that an example makes the best testimony of Christian charity. I hope it can help us all to rediscover as Pope Francis says that “(...) life is of no use if not used to serve others”.