

The Casey Corner

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June 2020



As our family has now lived in Spain longer under quarantine than not under quarantine, we've found ourselves doing quite a bit of reflecting on all the ways God has used this unpredictable time to encourage us.

--We arrived in Spain mere hours before the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, and within 2.5 weeks of our arrival we had signed a rental contract on our new home.

--Although our contract didn't start until the beginning of February, our landlord allowed us to move into the home, rent free, partway through January.

--We spent the 'extra' days in January busily furnishing our home, thanks to the generosity of so many of you!
Thank you, thank you, thank you!

--In February we continued turning this house into a functioning home. We got the heat up and running, had the mattresses delivered, bought some plants, and eventually hosted our first dinner with friends.

--By the beginning of March we were ready to GET ROLLING. We had FINALLY settled all our visa issues, more or less had the house in order, had signed up for intensive language classes, and had a great plan ready to implement in order to truly learn this language and begin engaging in our new local community quickly and efficiently.

And then COVID19.

No language classes. No new friendships. No leaving the house. No nothing (seemingly).

BUT THEN GOD SHOWED UP IN THE MIDST OF QUARANTINE.

Although we had lived in our home for 6 weeks before our shutdown started, did you know we hadn't met a single one of our neighbors? The opportunity simply hadn't presented itself.

Ironically, it was during quarantine when our entire street began applauding outside their front doors every night at 8pm that we actually met our neighbors.

Yes! We learned the names of all the neighbors that live closest to us, held basic small talk conversations with them, and mutually encouraged one another through the season we were going through.

3 weeks into quarantine the neighbors across the street baked our daughter a cake for her birthday. They then proceeded to lead the entire street in 'Feliz Cumpleanos' after our 8pm applause to make her quarantined birthday extra special.

On Mother's Day we delivered little muffins to everyone on the street, and the neighbors on our left gave me a fabulous bouquet of flowers from their garden in return.

The neighbors on our right are both extremely elderly and physically limited, and so Josh had helped take their trash out. (It's a 3 block walk to take the trash out here.) In their gratitude they've patiently exchanged chit-chat with us despite our limited verbal communication skills.

The neighbors across the street invited us over for a quick tour of their home, giving us their first strawberry of the season from their own garden as well as some beautiful flowers hand picked just for us. After that they introduced us to their foul-mouthed parrot who resides in their kitchen.

Just yesterday our neighbors on the left rang our bell and invited the girls to come swimming, RIGHT THEN. So the girls ran to put on their swimsuits, we dropped everything we were working on, and we went and hung out in their backyard for a half hour or so.

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Furthermore, as we were ending our evening stroll yesterday, I happened to see the neighbor on our right outside her front door, so I hollered a greeting to her, which then sparked a 20 minute conversation. After learning a bit about her life, we reminded her that we are here to help her, to let us know when she needs her trash taken out, and to not be shy about it. She replied, "You guys are servants."

I don't say that to boast, I say that to simply let you guys know how God is at work through us to reach these neighbors of ours with His love. Something as simple as taking the trash out is showing Jesus to these new friends of ours, people who without Covid19 and all the implications its reality has come with, we would've not begun these relationships with, at least not in this way.

Not only do we love the city God has brought us to, but we love the STREET God has brought us to. Our street is so very, very special. The elderly lady that lives on our right was proud to say that OUR STREET was the FIRST STREET in this city. She talked of the 'good ol' days' when this city was a mere pueblo. Now a bustling city of 30,000, Arroyomolinos has experienced a 900% population growth in recent years,. This city of ours is alive and growing....but WITHOUT A CHURCH!

One day, Lord willing, that will not be the case! For now we focus on learning this language and culture, because we know God has a heart for Arroyomolinos, and we know learning the language and culture is the first step to reaching the community for His Name's sake. He has a heart for our neighbors, He has a heart for the contacts we've made, and He has a heart for those that have never had the chance to hear of the hope in life found in Jesus!

Because of how dramatically we've seen God open up windows of opportunity with the neighbors on our street, we've decided to begin a specific prayer ministry for these families in particular. The name of our street is 'Calle del Clavel', which means 'Carnation Street', so we have decided to name this prayer ministry after that. We'll be sending more information about how you can be part of our Carnation Crew in a future email.

Thank you for praying our family through our adjustment to a new country in the midst of this global pandemic. We are thankful to be where we are, in this exact timing, because God has a way of making good come out of all the bad. Praise Him for all He's done, and we're looking forward to seeing what He continues to do!

As you pray for us over the next few weeks, please keep the following in mind:

- Our Carnation Street neighbors (Perhaps you could pray for our little part of the world each time you see a carnation?)
- Patience through our language learning process. We WANT to DO, DO, DO, but we know we first need to LEARN, LEARN, LEARN.
 - For wisdom and direction regarding the girls' schooling for this next year.
 - For sensitivity and humility as we lean into the Spirit's sharpening in our lives.
 - For diligence and faithfulness as we lead and disciple those the Lord has blessed us with.
- Prayer for this city, which is most certainly a focal point of spiritual warfare. May God protect our marriage, our family, our team, and this location He has led us to.

We are ever so grateful to have such a powerful, prayerful team behind us, holding the ropes before the throne of God on our behalf. Thank you for continuing in your generosity toward God through us, and thank you, thank you, thank you for remembering our family, our little corner of the world, and the small role our family is playing in God REACHING THE NATIONS.

He is worthy, ever so worthy!

Praying health, safety, and wisdom toward you all, in Christ,
The Casey Family

Thank you for your continual love, support, and prayers on our behalf!

—The Casey Family