

Transcript of Oral History Interview with Fran Para

Interviewee: Fran Para

Interviewer: Interviewer

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Abstract: Fran Para, a Roman Catholic for nearly half a decade, talks about how her faith has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. She also talks about how her church has adapted to COVID-19 guidelines and how it had affected her interactions with her religious community. Additionally, she briefly talks about what community service her church has engaged in to help those affected by the pandemic.

Interviewer 0:00

Okay, can you state your name for the record?

Fran Para 0:03

Fran Para.

Interviewer 0:04

I'm going to ask you three questions. And first off, before I go through the questions, what is your religious background or religious, what do you study?

Fran Para 0:20

I, uh,

Interviewer 0:20

Or practice?

Fran Para 0:21

-am Roman Catholic.

Interviewer 0:22

Roman Catholic. Okay. And how long have you been a Roman Catholic?

Fran Para 0:26

Since I was born, I am a cradle Catholic.

Interviewer 0:29

All right. And do you mind sharing how old you are?

Fran Para 0:34

51.

Interviewer 0:34

51. Okay, so a half a century? Roman Catholic?

Fran Para 0:40

Yes.

Interviewer 0:40

All right. So, um, how has COVID-19 affected your faith or beliefs?

Fran Para 0:49

You know, I'm kind of given that a lot of thought just because so many people, so many programs that I've been watching. You know, people are seeing, like, this is a punishment or this is God trying to say something. And I actually don't feel like it's impacted my fate, because I've already had so much happened to me in my past with the death of my children. So this is just another glitch in life, I guess, is just something that's happening. And it hasn't, it hasn't made my faith less, it hasn't made it stronger. It's really hasn't had any impact at all on it.

Interviewer 1:28

Got it. It's interesting that you, you say that, because I have been hearing different things about how this is part of the plan, or in certain religions, like this is what is to be expected. What are your thoughts on that?

Fran Para 1:46

You know, I've had this conversation with some other people that this is just part of life. And I kind of feel like that's it. This is just something that's happening. And I, again, I don't think it's like some punishment, but it, I don't, To me, this life is not supposed to be easy. If this life was easy, we'd already have heaven on earth. And I believe in heaven. And clearly, heaven's got to be greater than this. So there's to be, to me, there's to be expected some hardships in life and, and this is one of those that we just have to deal with.

Interviewer 2:21

Cool. All right. So, is your religious community still gathering currently?

Fran Para 2:26

No.

Interviewer 2:27

Okay. So, are they doing anything? Or?

Fran Para 2:31

Yeah, they're, they're live streaming services on, uh, every Sunday.

Interviewer 2:35

Okay. And so I would assume they have more, typically would have more than just a weekly service.

Fran Para 2:45

Yeah.

Interviewer 2:47

So, what, what has been the difference as far as how they've gathered previously until now?

Fran Para 2:53

Well, they're not gathering anymore. They're still, they do daily mass, and then they do weekly, they do the Sunday Mass with just, they don't have any more than six people in in the church at the time, just, just to the people who are needed to do music and record the, the Mass and then the actual priest doing the Mass.

Interviewer 3:15

Okay. And they do the Mass virtually every single, okay,.

Fran Para 3:21

Every single day.

Interviewer 3:22

Got it. Okay, cool. Um, so, has it changed how you participate?

Fran Para 3:33

No, I don't do the daily Mass and never went to daily Mass before. So, but I do this Sunday Mass in my PJs.

Interviewer 3:39

Okay, so it's, so it's safe to say that COVID-19 hasn't affected your participation?

Fran Para 3:46

Nope. Still going on Sundays.

Interviewer 3:48

All right. Is your religious community supplying or engaged in any kind of community service in attempt to help alleviate issues caused by the pandemic?

Fran Para 4:00

The food bank. So, they're still taking donations for food and providing food bank services to the needy.

Interviewer 4:06

Okay. And so have they noticed like an increase or,

Fran Para 4:10

Yeah, they've had to ask for more stuff to be dropped off because they've had more people coming to them.

Interviewer 4:16

Got it. Okay. And anything else that you think would be relevant to our conversation?

Fran Para 4:28

I don't, I don't think so. I mean, I really, this, like I said, you know, this just hasn't really impacted my faith in any way, nothing's really changed for me in regard to that.

Interviewer 4:39

Got it. Well, Fran, thank you so much for your time and allowing me to capture your thoughts and what you've experienced around COVID-19 and your, your religion. I will keep you updated on anything else I hear on my end but thank you so much.

Fran Para 5:00
You're welcome.