



The Ortega's Spring 2022 Newsletter

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Spring has arrived, and with it the multiple flowers of diverse and beautiful colors and sizes. Along with that, we also get all sort of allergies. While changes are inevitable in life, some good and some not so good, we are so glad that God never changes; He remains faithfully and consistently good. And we praise Him for that.

Maranatha Church (The Lord is Coming) We have seen many different people coming to Christ and to our church during this pandemic period, that we are still overwhelmed and amazed. Who would have thought that the fear would be such a crucial factor in people acknowledging their need of a Savior? In God's sovereignty, He uses anything and anytime to draw people to Himself, and we praise Him for that. After a few weeks of people attending church, I usually give them the 4 "O" option (this, by the way, has nothing to do with my last name): 1. **Observe** (Observe). 2. **Oye** (Listen) 3. **Ora** (pray) 4. **Obedece** (Obey, as in obey the Lord). So far, everybody who has come has decided to stay. The other thing I have consistently expressed with a smile on my face is: *"You are welcome to be part of Maranatha, but if you truly know the Lord and you decide to stay, you will have to find a ministry among us!"* We absolutely love the great results!



Our Group of Facilitators

We strive to center our main message on the 3 "S" Principle:

- 1. Salvation,
 - 2. Sanctification, and
 - 3. Service.
- We try to stay simple but clear.



My Life Group on Friday night



Going on 36 years into our marriage

February:

We celebrated yet another church anniversary, exalting the Lord's faithfulness and God's hand over us. For such a special occasion, we had as our guest speaker our beloved friend and TBM missionary to Spain Frank Benoit. He and Salud also granted us a very special Valentine's Day meeting with our couples.

March: We started yet another Life Group. This is a home-based Bible study with three primary objectives: 1. To Edify the believers. 2. To Evangelize the unbelievers. 3. To Encourage all attendees.

Family Matters: Sarai is stable, though she continues to deal with lupus and fibromyalgia. She has to take several days off from work (from home) in order to keep up with multiple doctor's appointments. Her next major surgical procedure is set for April 29, to remove an overgrowing mass from her spinal. Priscilla and her family is expecting their second baby boy on July 7. Sylvia continues to deal with her

Loeys-Dietz syndrome. Unfortunately, her aorta has continued to overgrow in diameter. Mary continues to deal with her chronic aches but finds a way to keep marching forward as a great trooper. I am eternally grateful for her life, as a wife, mother, grandmother and ministry partner. I (Franc) continue sharing God's Word, visiting, counseling, motivating and mentoring. Sure, I feel the weight of my years on my back, but the Lord's passion continues to burn in my heart.

More Matters: Gratitude to the Lord for bringing us this far and for keeping us. Prayer Requests: That He would continue to guard our hearts, humble and sensitive toward Him. For Sarai's surgery on April 29, and for her heart. For Priscilla's pregnancy and a safe delivery of their second baby, as well as for Sylvia's health. For Mary, that the Lord would continue to strengthen her to serve Him with me.

Missions Minded: Cuba continues to be very much in my heart. I stay abreast of the victories as well as the trials of these great Cuban pastors, national missionaries, evangelists and leaders every single day. The list is now in the hundreds, most of them ministering on the western part of this island nation. I already have those tickets bought to leave on May 23. **Ecuador** – Once again I have been honored to be the main speaker at an amazing pastors' retreat in Loja, Ecuador on the third week of July. **However, it is at this point that I've had to rewrite this portion of the letter.** As of the last month, I have felt a very bad case of gasping for air, I've been extremely exhausted and very lethargic. Trust me, this is NOT me! I have consulted with my family doctor for an echo exam, blood work and then ... yes – WAIT, like for several weeks until a second visit. Not knowing just what I'm dealing with, I decided to go across the border and visit a Mexican cardiologist who has already diagnosed my problem. He confirmed what another cardiologist in McAllen had told me 20 years ago. I'm dealing with a congenital condition where, as opposed to most people who are born with a tricuspid aortic valve, I was born with a bicuspid valve, which by the way, is quite worn out, very rigid and not allowing for the much needed blood/oxygen levels I desperately need. This causes me to be continually gasping for air, feeling lightheaded and a bit dizzy at times. The cardiologist expressed amazement that I have lived like this for 60 years. Long story made short – I am very disappointed to have to cancel both Cuba and Ecuador trips in order to take care of priorities, for it is quite risky to continue living the way I am. So, what all does this mean at this point? Exactly what I do not want to hear – I will probably have to make some radical changes as to the wild-paced life I have lived for 6 decades, very likely undergo surgery and only God knows what else. I have a follow-up visit with my primary physician, and then in about 2 more weeks the first visit with an American cardiologist, so he can tell me what I already know. So, your powerful prayers are very much appreciated.

We praise God for His faithfulness in sustaining us for over 33 years. What an incredible journey this has been. We praise God for Tentmakers Bible Mission standing by us, encouraging us and representing us. We also honor those few of you who have stood by us through thick and thin, in McAllen, in Cuba and in Ecuador. Only in heaven will we be able to look just what the Lord has done with us all, working as a team. We thank God for His faithfulness and we thank you for your finances and prayer support to make a difference in our lives and in the lives that we are that brings to ours. Words alone would never be enough to fully express our profound gratitude for your partnership. Thanks so much for walking this journey with us!

Franc & Mary Ortega

PS. I needed to hold off sending this until we had the latest news on Sarai's post op condition. She did undergo the spinal procedure and things did not go as well as expected. The original pandemic protocol called for surgery on Friday morning and for her to be released later on that same day. Things got complicated when after recovery she was unable to experience any sensation or movement on her left leg, so she was kept overnight. Saturday rolled in and her condition remained the same, so once again she was kept until today. Today she underwent an MRI of her spinal and we will anxiously await results tomorrow. Please continue to pray for her and for us all. Mary is especially exhausted.

PPS.

It appears that the pain medication they used at the surgical site had a numbing effect on the nerves and that is the reason for the lack of sensation and movement. It has already improved a bit today and she is being released from the hospital with no long-term problems expected. Please continue to lift Sarai up for healing and comfort.

