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**Catholic Extension announces Catholic Kinship Initiative – Parishes United Across America**

*Program aims for able parishes to raise funds for the 1,000 poorest parishes in the U.S.*

CHICAGO (February 8, 2021) – To support poor faith communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, [Catholic Extension](http://www.catholicextension.org/) is launching the Catholic Kinship Initiative – Parishes United Across America program, designed to match financially stable parishes with a poor parish in another part of the country. The initiative is seeking 1,000 faith communities to raise a minimum of $1,000 each during the Lenten season and beyond.

The gift of $1,000 can make a significant impact to parishes whose collections have dwindled to almost nothing since the onset of the pandemic.

[Father Fabian Marquez](https://www.lumenchristiaward.org/father-fabian-marquez-finalist) is the pastor of El Buen Pastor in the Sparks Colonia of El Paso, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Texas. Father Fabian has led the mission since 2015, serving a growing area with an influx of new residents from Mexico, many of them undocumented and refugees.

El Buen Pastor has long looked to Catholic Extension for financial assistance. Since 1999, Catholic Extension has sent more than $75,000 to support the church expansion and parish and priest salary subsidies.

The average weekly collection at Father Marquez’s parish went from $1,200 before the pandemic to as low as $45 now, severely impacting the parish’s ability to assist families in need. Fr. Fabian says that the support they will receive from the Catholic Kinship Initiative is like contributing to the “spirit of the community.”

According to Father Jack Wall, President of Catholic Extension, “Every $1,000 gift we receive will enable parishes and pastoral leaders, like Fr. Fabian, to do the core spiritual work of the Church among the poor as well as share the corporal works of mercy with those who are suffering.”

While parishes are being encouraged to give during Lent, support is needed throughout the year. “I am humbled and grateful for the parishes that have already chosen to give their support, but the need remains great, and many poor faith communities are still anxiously awaiting their $1,000 blessing,” said Fr. Wall.

For more information, visit the Catholic Kinship Initiative page on the Catholic Extension website at: <http://www.catholicextension.org/alms>.

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**About Catholic Extension:**Founded in 1905, Catholic Extension works in solidarity with people in America’s poorest regions to build up vibrant and transformative Catholic faith communities. For more information visit [www.catholicextension.org](http://www.catholicextension.org/); follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/catholicextension](http://www.facebook.com/catholicextension) or on twitter at [@CathExtension](http://www.twitter.com/cathextension).