



## **MATER DOLOROSA LAUNCHES “SPICE IT UP” CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF FOOD MINISTRY PROGRAM**

*Kitchen Continues to Provide Meals to Locals Impacted by COVID-19 with help from Community*

SIERRA MADRE, CA (July 27, 2020) – With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and statewide “Stay-at-Home” orders back in March, Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center added a practical outreach to its primary focus of spiritual nourishment. “While the primary mission at Mater Dolorosa is spiritual in nature, the COVID-19 pandemic has inspired us to reach out in other ways,” said Retreat Center Director Michael Cunningham. “Our Food Ministry Program allows us to feed the human spirit in a very practical way, so we hope to secure continued funding to turn what started as a necessary response to the pandemic into a permanent, ongoing Food Ministry program. The need for nutritious meals in our communities is real and persistent.”

With the generous support of retreatants, friends and corporate sponsors, the Mater Dolorosa Food Ministry Program has prepared, packaged, and delivered around 25,000 meals since March. In addition to preparing meals for Sierra Madre seniors, Mater Dolorosa’s Executive Chef Ricardo Solda and his crew also cook for a homeless community in the Lario Park area of Azusa served by Foothill’s Kitchen in Monrovia, and the St. Francis Center in Los Angeles.

“Mater Dolorosa Retreat Center in Sierra Madre Retreat Center has come to our rescue!! The (Passionist) Retreat Center is making 150 meals EVERY DAY for us, and then freezing them until we pick them up. They are cooking enough food for us to serve 6 days a week!” says Carol Daley, co-founder of Foothill’s Kitchen.

Each meal prepared by the Mater Dolorosa kitchen staff costs \$6.53 to produce, which is about 15 meals for every \$100 donated to the Food Ministry. Cue the MDPRC Spice Up Your Summer campaign: for every \$100 donation, Mater Dolorosa will send donors a spice kit containing a bulk-sized bag of spice or herb and a couple of recipes featuring the included spice that are easy to make and tasty to the palate!

“Spice Up Your Summer” was launched to specifically support the Mater Dolorosa Food Ministry Program with the help and generosity of long-time friend and retreatant, Tom Tharayil, President/CEO of Pax Spices ([www.paxspices.com](http://www.paxspices.com)). Tom’s company not only donated varied spices to the Mater Dolorosa kitchen with ample supplies for meal preparations, but also enabled the Retreat Center staff to roll out this fun and spice-focused fundraising campaign.

Despite the re-opening of many businesses and organizations, the need for food preparation and distribution services has not diminished and to keep serving the most vulnerable during the uncertainty of the coming months, we still need your support! If you can donate towards this essential ministry it will help us keep important staff fully utilized, as well as support our mission in the most practical way we know how.

Donations can be made at: <https://materdolorosa.org/covid-19-mater-dolorosa-response/> or by mailing a check to Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center at 700 N Sunnyside Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA 91024.

*The Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center is a ministry of the Passionists of Holy Cross Province. The Passionists purchased the 88-acre Retreat Center property in northwest Sierra Madre in 1924 and have offered spiritual retreats there since 1926.*

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*Volunteers preparing to serve meals from the MDPRC Kitchen to local homeless community at Lario Park.*