

By Fr. Peter Precourt, A.A.

I have now been here for two weeks and have begun to find my way around El Paso. Thank goodness for the app Waze which guides me through the maze of roads here in Southern Texas. This is no small city. It is very spread out. I would say that 95% of the buildings are only one story high and that includes most of the commercial property. The tall buildings are found in the city center and college campuses. The current population is estimated at around 682,669. The diocese of El Paso is estimated at 80% of the population. When it comes to weather, I would say “Toto this is not New England”. This a desert climate that is cool at night and warm during the day. The humidity is generally around 12%. The trees (which are few) have been planted and are watered daily by irrigation. It is quite dusty when the wind blows because there is not much vegetation to keep the soil down.

I have had the opportunity to speak with a few of the religious communities that are established here in El Paso. They are already involved with immigrants and run programs for those who wish to experience the reality of what is happening here at the border. There is a great deal of collaboration among them.

What has certainly impressed me is the warm welcome I have received from everyone in this diocese. All have expressed their delight that we have chosen to come to El Paso. That warmth is also felt with the general population. People seem much more courteous and less stressed. No matter where I may be, people acknowledge my presence in a very friendly manner. This includes those who serve in the supermarket. Ah yes, I do need to go shopping in order to get groceries for my meals. I am my own cook, so I do not complain about the meals. I am currently living in a diocesan apartment that was constructed for retired priests of the diocese. (No, I am not retired) It is quite comfortable and more than adequate for one person. It was offered to me by the Bishop while I seek a place for our community in the diocese.

I will try to send more information as this process continues. I do keep all of you in my prayers. Please remember me in yours.