



Valley Interfaith

Some reflections from Fr. Alfonso Guevara

Fr. Alfonso Guevara, a long-time clergy leader with Valley Interfaith, passed away on February 10. He worked for many years to help ordinary men and women develop their confidence and skills so that they could do extraordinary things in their parishes and communities. Here are a few statements made by Fr. Guevara to the Rio Grande Guardian.

Guevara: Valley Interfaith makes the politicians look good

By **Steve Taylor** October 28, 2013

Groups like Valley Interfaith make the work of a politician easy because they bring people together, hold house meetings, listen to concerns and rally a community around issues that matter.

This is the view of the Rev. Alfonso Guevara, pastor at St. Joseph the Worker Church in McAllen. Guevara had been a priest for six years in Brownsville when Valley Interfaith formed 30 years. He has proudly been associated with the group ever since...

...Guevara likes to call Valley Interfaith's house meetings relational meetings. He said they serve to allow residents to learn about what is happening in their community. "We make the politicians look good because we bring them issues that should be important to them. You have to decide how public money should be divided and the agenda formulated at our relational meetings helps to do this. It has been a wonderful privilege for me to have done this part of my ministry...."

"Where does this theology go from the head to the heart? That is a big question for me. For me it was through Valley Interfaith. This group gave me the capacity to become a public person, to reach outside of my parish, to do wonderful things. It was a challenge for me because I am naturally a quiet person, an introvert. I therefore had to step out of my comfort zone, many, many times. The result was I became much more confident and later I was able to mentor people that became extraordinary, wonderful, leaders...."

Rev. Guevara: It was a blessing to participate in Raymondville Drain groundbreaking ceremony by Steve Taylor Oct 9 2017

Guevara said the thousands of colonia residents on the eastern side of Hidalgo County that will benefit from improved drainage deserve help. He said the project took him back to his time as priest at Christ the King in Brownsville, when he had led colonia residents in a lengthy fight for better flood control measures.



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“I can relate because when I was working in Brownsville, at Christ the King, whenever we had a downpour it would flood so many of our colonias. On one occasion, we lost a young person because of the drainage system. We worked for years, with Valley Interfaith, with the water district, with the City of Brownsville, to make sure water flowed into the Brownsville Ship Canal and not into the colonias.”

Investing millions of dollars in economically distressed areas By: Rev. Kevin Collins and Rev. Alfonso Guevara

Valley Interfaith leaders recognize Democratic Senators Eddie Lucio, Jr and Juan Hinojosa, and Republican Senator Charles Perry from Lubbock, for their efforts to generate investment in South Texas' poorest families.

They authored Senate Bill 2452 and Senate Joint Resolution 79, which would allow the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to use money from the Economically Distressed Areas Program (EDAP) to bring millions of dollars to economically distressed areas to cover most of the costs to provide access to drinking and waste water services. These bills passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in both chambers; and on June 14, Republican Governor Greg Abbott signed S. B. 2452.

In 1989, Valley Interfaith and our sister Texas IAF organizations worked with our state senators and representatives to pass the first EDAP legislation. This legislation allowed the state to sell bonds to invest in water and wastewater services in “colonias” and other low-income areas throughout the state.

EDAP money went to cities, counties, water districts, and supply corporations to plan, buy land, design, and build the needed water infrastructure. This project transformed the Rio Grande Valley and communities throughout Texas by providing over \$1 billion for water projects that have served over 400,000 residents.