

## **Transcript of Oral History Interview with “Emma Telamontes”**

**Interviewee:** “Emma Telamontes”

**Interviewer:** Traci Person

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**Location (Interviewee):** unknown

**Location (Interviewer):** unknown

**Transcription Equipment:** Otter.ai

**Interview Technology:** Zoom-recording

**Abstract:** Traci Person interviews a student with the pseudonym "Emma Telamontes" on their religious experiences during the opening stages of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Traci Person 00:00**

Okay, so as the interviewer My name is Traci Person, and as the interviewee I have “Emma Telamontes.” And just for a first statements, this interview will be recorded and uploaded to the ASU COVID-19 archive project, which is public. Do you understand and grant permission that this interview can be recorded and made public on the ASC website?

**"Emma Telamontes" 00:23**

Yes.

**Traci Person 00:24**

Alrighty, so the first question I have for you is How has COVID 19 affected your faith or your beliefs?

**"Emma Telamontes" 00:34**

It has definitely shaped my preexisting beliefs into more of well, I, I feel like in times of chaos and stuff like this. People are like searching for something to have hope in and something to, like rely on. And in my life, like the Lord has been like, my rock through, like my life. And you know, that's just said so much growing up, like you just know that, but I'm truly experiencing, like, literally a devastated world and a hopeless world. And being able to have, like someone to rely on, as like, because we're all in the same boat. And I was just talking to a friend the other day about how like, celebrities and athletes and all these people, nobody's immune to it, you know? Yeah. And so, it's definitely just reminded me about how much he is rock and yeah.

**Traci Person 01:42**

Awesome. I totally agree on that. If you don't mind for me, do you mind stating what your faith is?

**"Emma Telamontes" 01:49**

Yes, I am. Roman Catholic, and I've been Catholic since a baby.

**Traci Person 01:55**

Oh, righty, question number two, is your religious community still gathering currently? And how has COVID-19 affected your personal participation and your religious community?

**"Emma Telamontes" 02:09**

Oh, wow. Um, yeah, ever since. I think this has been the fourth Sunday without in person mass. Um, so that has been really tough, not being able to receive the sacraments. But my community as far as like, at ASU, like young people, um, we still keep in touch over zoom and like small groups and Bible studies, but it's not the same. And community is such a vital part of faith that, like iron sharpens iron. And so yeah, it has been a major shift for myself to be able to, like, hold myself almost accountable of like, I still need to be in the word and I still need to be praying, and like doing virtual masses at home. So it has been definitely a shift and I miss the physical community and praise and worship together and masses and everything, but it definitely has, like, strengthened my own ability, I guess, to hold myself accountable. And I've definitely, I guess, been yearning for more of the Lord in my life, since I can't physically like receive him in the Eucharist and stuff. So, it's been yeah, I've been like even more diving into the Word and so that's been a plus, but it is difficult.

**Traci Person 03:40**

So on that, would you almost say that people have like really religiosity in general do you think that having you know a new almost forced in by Forrest I mean, like, during the circumstances that we're in, do you think it's difficult for like I said, people with religiosity to have to be almost forced into this new like zoom or even like uploaded, you know, mass like almost as related to ASU like a lecture like being uploaded and having to watch it at home? Do you think that truly affects like people now and maybe as a community when you guys get back together, or even as a church, when everyone gets back together for mass that it will be different? Or like they'll feel more together when you get back together? Or how do you how do you view that?

**"Emma Telamontes" 04:30**

Yeah, oh my gosh, definitely. I've been thinking about that so much, too. I feel like I would take not so much for granted, I guess but I just wasn't aware of what a privilege it is to attend Mass and even being in the United States where we can like freely practice religion. I that always just kind of was a given and I never really took time to sit and appreciate it. And as I was as this whole thing was like coming about, and we kind of knew that masses are going to be getting canceled. It was like coming, it was inevitable. I like was thinking about all the people in other countries who, like, don't have that freedom on a daily basis. And so that gave me a deeper appreciation for it, definitely. And then just going the couple of weeks without it, it just feels kind of like, empty. And like part of that being like the mass, and then part of that being community too. So, I feel like a lot of my friends are feeling that way. And family and even

friends that may be like, um, had fallen away from the church. I feel like even it's affecting them too. So when we all do, you know, come back together as a community and stuff. I feel like, it's definitely just going to be like a rebirth.

**Traci Person 05:54**

Yeah, for sure. No, I completely agree. And a lecture that we had just watched, and the course that I'm taking, which is religion, 101, there was a guest speaker, who is Dr. Evan Berry. And he was talking about environmental issues and like pandemics and just global issues that have happened. And there was an instance that I remember, and he was talking about how recently that Pope Francis is very adamant about just like global issues and environmentalism and stuff like that. Do you think that that as almost being like, the center of Catholicism, do you think that has like a role on how Catholics in general almost feel about during the pandemic, that they have this kind of higher authority that they have, that is like, advocating for, you know, more community, more unity, stuff like that? Do you think that's like a sense of hope, as well, as you know, just in Catholicism in general?

**"Emma Telamontes" 06:55**

Yeah. Oh, my gosh, definitely. I feel like, it's so unique to Catholicism that we have, you know, Pope Francis here, like, on Earth with us, and that, yeah, we can just, like look to Him for just not advice, but just, you know, paving the way for us to be able to be more like Christ. And, yeah, I feel like that is a huge, like, beacon of hope and unity, too, because, I mean, he tweets in every language, and it just makes us realize how universal the Catholic Church is. Yeah, it's been, I love seeing his tweets and lives. And yeah,

**Traci Person 07:38**

I find that so interesting to how it's almost like this transition from older you know, Catholicism and like maybe, you know, almost having this like secular versus, like religious side, you know, like state and church being very separated. But now that we have like Twitter and Instagram and stuff like that, like, even the pope himself can be like intertwined with this. And like even said before, be very advocate about like, you know, pandemic social issues. So, it's just very interesting to see how that could change, you know, just viewpoints and stuff like that. Third question I have for you is, is your religious community supplying or engaging in any kind of community service and an attempt to alleviate issues caused by the pandemic? If so, what are those efforts?

**"Emma Telamontes" 08:29**

Honestly, I'm not sure if I've seen any, like, I know that people within my home parish here in Phoenix, not the Newman center by here that just like people are chipping in to, like, take someone else's like adoration slot or like, bring meals to this elderly person or groceries to this elderly people, but I'm not sure if they're doing anything, like on a larger scale. Yeah. But um, I mean, they definitely should. So yeah, there's a big like sea of people that I'm sure are like, willing to help. I'm not sure. And especially since we're not having like actual collections on us. Yeah. So, I'm not sure how that's working.

**Traci Person 09:15**

Right. Maybe there's online something.

**"Emma Telamontes" 09:18**

Yeah.

**Traci Person 09:19**

Hopefully for sure. Well, I just want to say thank you so much for being my interviewee today, and yeah, so like I said, my name is Tracy person. I am the interviewer and my interviewee here today was "Emma Telamontes" and thank you.

**"Emma Telamontes" 09:35**

Thank you.