

# Danko, the Dog, Is Not to Blame

Carlos J. Tenorio

## Facing Fear

I wake up with the same noise every day. Our German shepherd, called Danko, is again scratching all over his body and biting one of his hind legs. I hear the noise in my dream, and I try to stay asleep. But Danko increases the intensity of his scratches, and I can't stand it anymore. I open my eyes and look at him. He stops scratching and looks at me out of the corner of his eye.

Danko is not to blame for my early morning awakening. What is to blame is my fear of almost everything during the last two months. A new day has arrived, and I write down in my diary, "Day 47 of quarantine at home."

## Head of the Disinfection Station

I am 73 years old, and the coronavirus is very dangerous for people over 65. To protect ourselves, we follow strict quarantine. Danko and I now sleep in the living room. Covid-19 forced me out of the marriage room, separating me from my wife. My youngest son works for Amazon. Thanks to the risk he assumes, we have money to feed ourselves and pay the bills. When he comes home in the afternoon, he goes through my "disinfection station" before entering the house. He washes his hands and puts his clothes in the washing machine. I disinfect his personal items, such as wallet, credit cards, cell phone, laptop, and watch. If my son brings home groceries, I wipe them down with bleach. If we plan to re-use the grocery bags, they spend several days in quarantine before we use them again.

Recently, I have developed a problem with sneezing and red eyes. Usually, I am allergic to pollen in the spring, but my allergy now is more due to contact with chemicals. As the head of the disinfection station in my house, I come into contact with strong chemicals many times a day.



## With These Weapons

My quarantine has been difficult. The coronavirus came and sealed our home, showing us the harsh reality of living in strict confinement for so many days. But it has taught me to reinvent myself. It has reminded me that patience, solidarity, prayer and love for God and our fellow people are weapons of great value. With these weapons, we can fight against the quarantine side effects. Days will pass. Danko will keep scratching himself every morning, and I will wake up early and look for his sideways gaze, until God wills it otherwise.

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**AFTER YOU READ:** How does Carlos fight both the coronavirus and the side effects of quarantine? What does it mean to "reinvent" yourself? How have you reinvented yourself recently?