

COMMITMENT TO TRUTH AND TO OTHERS

On this occasion, I want to talk to you about my friend, the Jesuit priest Javier Ávila, whom many know as "El Pato Ávila." We studied together at Instituto Patria. The values-based education we received both at home and from the Jesuits was crucial.

I'll start by telling you that Javier played the guitar in La Fauna, a musical group of Catholic believers that enriched the lives of many people in the 1960s and 1970s. Music has been an important part of both his personal life and his ministry. Javier has a special way of connecting with others, always from a place of freedom.

If Javier had been a contemporary of Jesus Christ, he would have resembled the disciples and contrasted radically

with the Pharisees. Since the beginning of his ministry in 1975, he has lived in the Sierra Tarahumara, serving the Rarámuri community, and he even speaks their language. The Tarahumara essence runs through his veins, characterized by resilience and a deep connection with nature, just as the Jesuit essence does, embodying the Ignatian purpose of "loving and serving in all things."

More than words, Javier has taken action and has become a cornerstone in the defense of human rights in our country. He co-founded the Commission for Solidarity and Defense of Human Rights, A.C., and helped establish a dialogue platform to address issues related to the interests of the indigenous peoples of Chihuahua. In 1989, together with Bishop José Alberto Llaguno, he



founded the Commission for Solidarity and Defense of Human Rights, A.C. His courage in speaking uncomfortable truths has placed him in very delicate situations, even putting his life at risk. However, his convictions and commitment to his values have been stronger than any threat.

Javier lives what he preaches. He places great importance on personal relationships and family unity. He knows how to listen and offers wise and serene words.

During the pandemic, he created a virtual community of believers who gathered for the Mass he officiated online. This initiative has been a source of strength for many, including Mari Carmen and me.

At the age of 82, he walked the Camino de Santiago, covering nearly 350 kilometers. With his characteristic openness to life, he embraced this experience as an opportunity for renewal and to share his fulfillment and joy with those around him.

On February 22, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination in Tepatlán, alongside family and friends who have been part of his journey. It was a very special gathering, primarily organized by Julieta Bustamante. It allowed us to reflect on Javier's life and on life itself as an extraordinary gift.

Marta Salazar Padilla summarizes Javier's legacy in the following phrase:

"Javier Ávila's legacy is a commitment to others, from the essence of being."

