

A saint and me

A translation of <https://campanitasdefe.com/2018/01/13/un-santo-y-yo/>

***Summary.** This little bell tells the story of how I met the famous Colombian priest **Rafael García Herreros**. The song “**I dream, oh I dream**” inspired by him, who is in the process of being declared a saint, can be heard in Spanish [here](#). The song can also be heard and visualized in a YouTube video by the end of the text.*

*The blog [Presentation](#) provides information about the purpose of these little bells and the blog [Organization](#) shows how the entries are grouped by categories. This entry belongs to the categories “**Experiential little bells**” and “**Colombian little bells**.”*

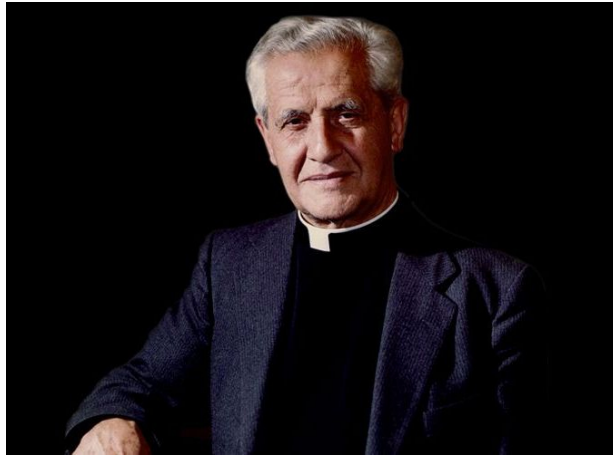
In 1989, shortly after my epiphany, as recounted in a [previous](#) little bell and in a [later one](#), I had the opportunity to live in my homeland, in **Bogotá**, surrounded by family and close friends, who supported me in the midst of difficult times in which my eight-year marriage was falling, and finally succumbed.

When few believed that **God** could have touched my heart, as if something good could not come out of **Davis** — what a disproportionate analogy of a **Nathanael** who will appear in a [future](#) little bell! — **Gladys**, my dear and pious mother-in-law at the time and who very much liked later on my song [Oh preferred Virgin](#), having realized that something good had happened to me, decided to take me, with all **faith**, to the famous neighborhood **El Minuto de Dios** (**God’s minute**) of the capital city, so that there I could share my [testimony of conversion](#) with a **priest**.

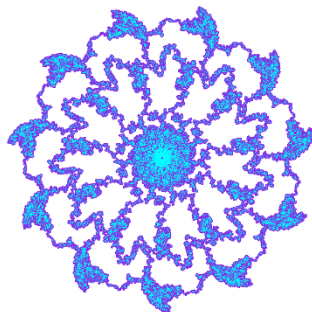
We arrived on a cold afternoon at the end of July and sat down to wait for a servant of **God** to be available. There, suddenly, I remembered a university classmate who left the country like others, who found his vocation beyond mathematics or engineering and, even better, in the priesthood. We asked for him and were told to exit to the right and go to an office a couple of doors away.

Indeed, my brother, **Father Camilo Bernal**, was there, and we had a beautiful reunion that also coincided, surely not by chance, with his birthday. We spoke, first in the company of **Gladys**, and then alone, and there I understood that said appointment, guided not only by her **faith** but also by my sparking memory, was being orchestrated for my spiritual health in the months and years to come.

As time went by, **Camilo** and I deepened our friendship and together witnessed difficult events for the country such as the assassination of presidential candidate **Luis Carlos Galán**. On one fine day, however, and in the midst of our frequent meetings, he told me that he had spoken about me to **Father Rafael García Herreros**, founder of the concept and works of **El Minuto de Dios**, and that he wanted to meet me.



Father García Herreros, who left in 1992, and in all probability towards heaven, continues being, for his great many contributions, an important icon in **Colombia**. His *pioneering* work in various fields, including evangelization through radio and television, the active promotion of peace, the fight against poverty, education in the neighborhood that he founded at the level of kindergarten, schools and universities — this last one already happening in various cities of the country and educating more than 100 thousand students a year — and, in a notable and effective way, the massive construction of housing for marginalized communities involving the entire society of the country, persist to date, and, of course, I felt supremely honored to be able to meet him ...



... As the days went by, **Father Camilo** called me by phone and told me that **Father Rafael** was waiting for me. I told him that I was going to get ready and that I would take a taxi as soon as I could. Once I told the taxi driver that I was going to the **Minuto de Dios** site and having shared with him the emotion I had in meeting someone who had communicated with

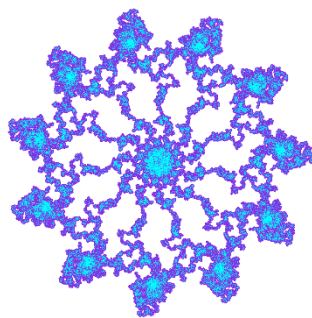
the country daily for a minute before the national nightly news — hence consistently “*God’s minute*” — the man felt the need to vent with me by sharing his painful infidelities and, although he knew that I could not forgive *sins* since I was not a *priest*, he asked me for due advice, which clearly corresponded to asking for *forgiveness* from the heart, seeking *reconciliation*, which, also from my heart, I wished him in the forgiveness of his wife.

When I arrived at my destination, *Father Rafael* was sitting in the middle of a sofa and invited me to sit next to him. He had the translucent and gently penetrating gaze of a *saint*, and suddenly he asked me: “*And what is your name?*” Upon hearing the answer, he suddenly turned towards me and delicately touching my temple with the thumb and little finger of one of his hands he said firmly: “*Dream Carlitos, only those who dream do something in life.*”

His act took me by surprise and that unexpected touch became one of the essential events of my life. What an invitation I received! What an honor as it comes from someone who listened to the *Spirit of God* to dream and thus really do a lot for others! What a memory of such a special being who, hopefully soon, will be declared *San Rafael García Herreros!*

He wanted to have a mathematics academy there in the neighborhood, modest in resources but not in love, and I collaborated by donating some books and sharing some talks to which he attended, always asking the best questions. He invited people to my talks by writing short articles in a newspaper and I remember one time how he showed his displeasure when one of his calls did not have the desired reception, adding that that was why we did not prosper.

With great joy I can affirm that the presence of *Father Rafael García Herreros* subsists in my days of the 21st century, in particular through a photo of him titled “*A Prophet of the 20th Century*” that adorns my office here at the *University of California, Davis* and that helps me not forget, and always remember, our initial meeting. Certainly, his memory accompanies me because I can also add, with vital gratitude, that he has been the priest who has most openly supported me ...



... With the kind sponsorship of **Fathers Camilo Bernal**, who celebrated my marriage with my Marta after two annulments, what a **merciful God** we have!; **Harold Castilla**, kind chancellor of the neighborhood university for several years; and **Diego Jaramillo**, spiritual father of many — including me — and faithful heir to the noble cause of **El Minuto de Dios** — read [here](#) a beautiful interview about his impressive career — over the years I have shared with great joy various conferences in several locations of the **University Minuto de Dios, Uniminuto**, founded by **Father Rafael**.

I don't know how many times they have been, but I do know that I have given them with a lot of love and always in honor of **him**. On several occasions, and in multiple instances on the same day, I have repeated what is naturally the first in a cycle of talks that explains, **based on science**, why **Jesus** is **the way, the truth, the life, the hypotenuse** and **the route to peace, the only one** that leads to the **Father**, (Jn 14:6), as it will appear summarized in some little bells to come: [here](#), [here](#) and also [here](#).



As a tribute to **Father Rafael** and the extraordinary **Eudist Fathers**, who continue the legacy of the Frenchman **Saint John Eudes** (1601-1680) — whose crucifix I held in my hands, when **Father Camilo** suddenly gave it to me while we were talking in **Rome** and he was the **Superior General**, worldwide, of the **Congregation of Jesus and Mary**, formal name of the **Eudist Fathers** —here are the lyrics of my song “***I dream, oh I dream***,” followed by an animated YouTube video of the beautiful interpretation in Spanish by **Leonel Mederos Bravo** with **Aarón Pérez Pupo** on piano, based on a lovely arrangement by **Lázaro Alemán López**, musical director of my **Shanti Setú/Puente de Paz**.

I DREAM, OH I DREAM

To continue dreaming!

I dream
that the day comes,
I dream
that love wins.

I dream
and poetry nests,
and the value of life
is consciousness of union.

I dream
that this chant is heard,
I dream
that already peace reigns.

I dream
and the enchantment gets poured,
and the power of wisdom
is spilled more and more.

I dream
that the bud gets open,
I dream
that the voice is listened to.

I dream
and the cooing is felt,
and the clamor mine and yours
is reflected in the flower.

I dream
that the “little steps” are danced,
I dream
that they turn into action.

I dream
and another myth sinks,
and infinite knowledge
is a gift from the sun.

Oh, I dream, dream,
that love triumphs.

(June 2002)



The song in Spanish may be heard and visualized [here](#).

I have the impression that **Father Rafael**, patron of these *Little bells of faith* because of *his* unforgettable *touch*, and perhaps also the **founding Saint**, due to my unexpected *touch* of **Jesus** in his perennial and valuable **Y = X**, that is *his crucifix*, have given the video an enthusiastic “*like*” from their infinite cell phones in heaven.

Here there are on the day of the recording **Leonel** and **Aarón**...

