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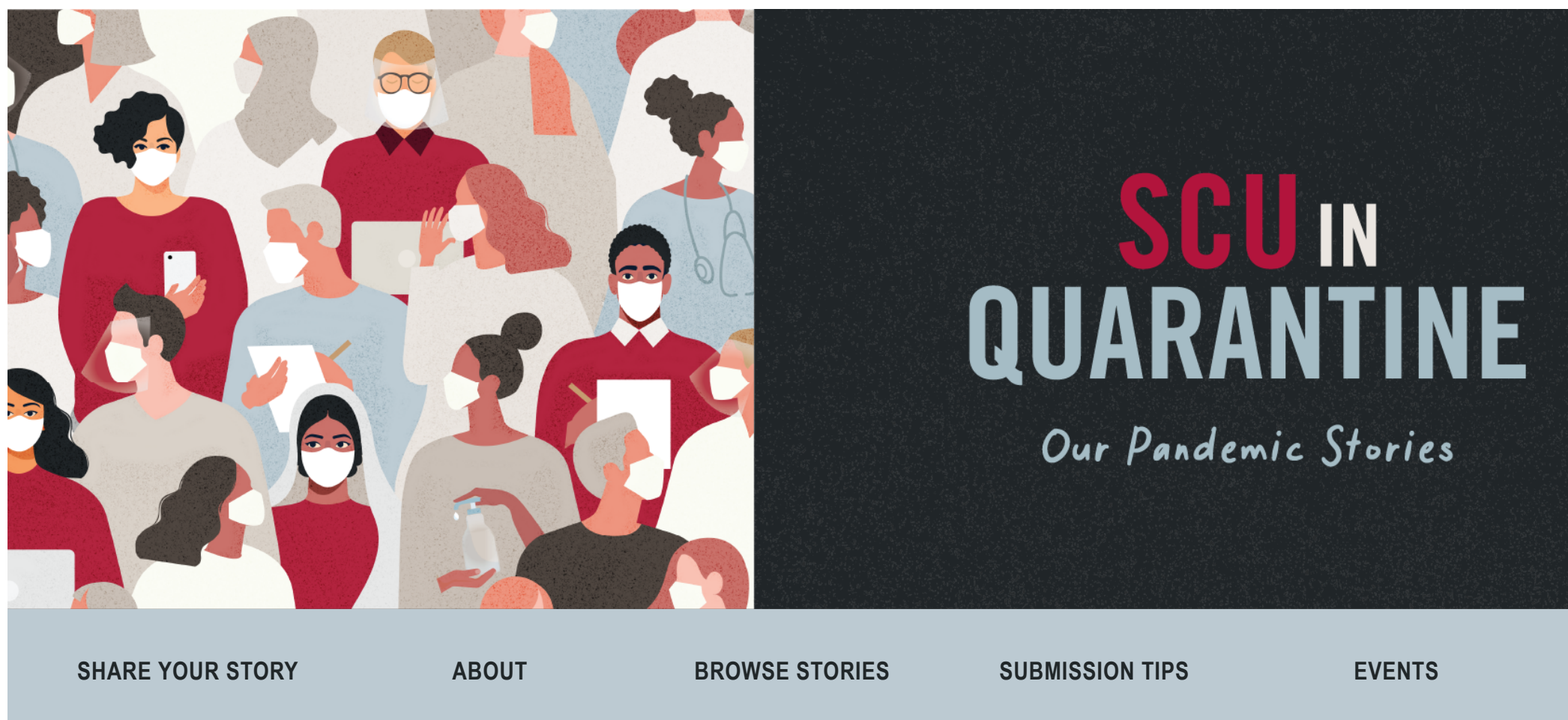
"See" You Soon

Tony Cortese SJ

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“See” You Soon

Tony Cortese, S.J.

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When I signed up to become a Jesuit four-and-a-half years ago, never could I have imagined that I would spend over one year of my life conducting more “ministry” from my MacBook than in person. Actually, if someone would have told me that this is what being a Jesuit would be like, in all honesty, I never would have joined.

The thing is: I really like to be with people. A lot. I derive so much energy from the organic connections of everyday life—the walk back to the office after a great event on campus, the person asking for a spot on their bench press at the gym, the chatty bartender, the chatty friend I have who lives in a tent along Guadalupe River. All of those connections have disappeared. Sure, I do take an occasional walk along the Guadalupe River to say hi to some of the folks I know there, but I do so with so much caution now that it ceases to feel human.

You should probably know this about me: The only social media I have right now is LinkedIn (and that I hardly ever use). Without boring you with all the reasons why I am staying as far away from social media as I can, I mention this just to set the context as to why I am one of the last people you’d expect to be finding any sort of nourishment from Zoom, Teams, and FaceTime. I am the type of person who would rather us all be living on communes off the grid.

But guess what? I can say with all sincerity, one year into this pandemic, that I am extremely grateful for Zoom, Teams, and FaceTime (I mention those three because they just happen to be the ones I use the most). Yep, that’s right, I said it. I am happy they exist. And without them, I never would have been able to meet and share life with so many of you, the faculty, staff, and students of Santa Clara University. You have let me into the depths of your lives in ways I never thought possible over a video screen. Thank you for giving me the privilege of being a companion in mission with you here at SCU.

Am I tired of doing this over video? Absolutely. Do I sometimes wish I could throw away all my devices and just live more deeply connected to the land and to one another? For sure. But am I glad that I haven’t done that quite yet? Yes. There is work to be done right now over the screen. And if and when the time comes for me to throw away all my devices and start a commune, I’ll know. You’re invited.

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