



## Dec 25, 2019 Weekly Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.



On Christmas Day 15 youth journeyed to a senior care facility about 2 hours from Tijuana. These youth had to fund raise to augment the cost of the trip and/or contribute some of their own funds. They sold hot chocolate, breads, elotes, flautas, and other goodies after masses. They were

able to bring 40 warm and cozy blankets, gloves, and cleaning supplies. Some of the youth cleaned while others cooked or visited. They managed to clean the entire 40 bed fully occupied facility. This was complicated by the fact that the facility had not had

running water for the three days. So the



youth journeyed another 40 minutes to buy bottled water, just so they could clean. While mopping and cleaning toilets, some of the seniors were a bit embarrassed and said to leave it for them to clean. But the youth said “We are here to do whatever it takes.” The clientele enjoyed relating stories of times past.



I (David, coauthor) want to add a personal note. My mom and my sister joined us, and we got to share the day together, something we often cannot do at home. We really counted our blessings. I am especially thankful for all the people who gave up their Christmas Day family time to journey with us and help people they have never met. It was my birthday, and it was the best celebration I could have had; helping others the way people have helped me

*This is my mom cooking tortillas for everyone and my sister doing the dishes.*



“My name is Dennis and I was born in Managua Nicaragua in 1982. I think of myself as a cheerful, sincere, charismatic person with a good heart. Despite my difficult past I do not hold grudges. I like to strive for what I want in order to fulfill my dreams. I always try to see the positive side in people. I have a strong character, and I am willing to share my experiences and knowledge with others. However, I try not to bother other people with my problems.

I like to listen to music, exercise, and read books. I like to write poetry when I feel melancholy or angry. I see my God (Jesus) as an example to follow and as someone who guides me. I am where I am today because of Him.

My father is from Leon and my mother was born in Granada. I am one of two boys from a first marriage, but have nine siblings now. I grew up in a place with a lot of conflict and learned to play with guns and even grenades. I was raised in a very male-dominant household with five boys and only two girls. All my brothers were in the army during the revolution. Mostly I grew up without parents, and my grandparents tried to raise us. There was a lot of alcoholism and domestic violence. I witnessed my grandmother being beaten. We went without much in the way of clothes and food. I would sometimes sleep upside down as a way to quell my hunger. At 10 years of age my grandfather passed away.

When I was much younger, we moved and that eventually led to having a very bad step-mother. I was offered for sex. I was raped and became a sexual object for six years. Because of maltreatment, I went to live in the streets. People were very mean, but I can say, I would have rather died than be raped. I don't judge my father, however, since he was young with two children and these were difficult circumstances.

Joining the caravan, I made my way to the United States. The trek was harrowing and I was almost killed. But, thanks to God I made it. Also, I am grateful to the people who came along side of us on the long trip, making sacrifices and donations to help us. It made a very tough journey more bearable.

I also thank God for Fr. Jesse (OMI priest in Tijuana), the many youth, especially Adriana, and the Oblate mission. They treated us like family. They provided food, shelter, medicine, work, legal advice, and psychological and spiritual counseling, all without any expectation of

something in return. I am being detained waiting the legal processing of my application. Father Jesse has come to visit me, even though I am no longer in his mission area. He truly cares for all of us.

Thank you for being that family that I never had in my childhood.”



This is Adriana Lizbeth Martinez Sánchez, and she is studying to be a teacher who specializes in language and literature, thanks to her scholarship donor Michael Kerze. When she graduates, she will be the first in her large family to do so. Her father died a couple of years ago making college an unlikely prospect.