



## June 1, 2020 Weekly Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

The reality of the Oblates reaching out to the most abandoned and poor hit home as we visited some families in a nearby spring-up-over-night community. We watched over a few months as lots began to be populated by migrants building houses out of scrap wood and tarps. Soon there was a whole community of people hoping for a fresh start and better opportunity. Then coronavirus hit, and their hopes turned to even greater hardship. The first family we visited was a 50-year-old man, his wife, and two children. He has been blind for 30 years, due to a head injury. He earns a little money selling pozol, a Mexican drink made with chocolate and corn. He is a happy person and thanks God that he has the opportunity to work. We gave them a despensas (care package) and asked if there is anything we can help them with. He pointed to a woman standing in the doorway, who he had sent his son to retrieve. He said, yes, this is my neighbor, can you help her?



We journeyed a short distance to her house, noticing her 10-year-old son seemed to need a bit of guiding as they walked. It turned out he is also blind and has been so for two years. They tried to have his eyes operated on, but somehow it made things worse. He tried attending school, but the kids made fun of him, so he dropped out. Their house is even poor for this neighborhood; no bathroom, no stove, no refrigerator, etc. She sells ice cream from a cart that she pushes up and down the neighborhood. His mother tried to get him into a special needs school, but it was too expensive. She told us that he has tried to commit suicide two times. Our resident psychologist, Eduardo, visited with him, and he really seemed to enjoy talking with someone who was not making fun of him.



We are enormously proud of our Alejandra Miranda, who is a centerpiece at our youth center, and since the beginning of our scholarship program, has been the coordinator. She has been a recipient of a scholarship compliments of Joan Slimocosky, and below, she gives an update on her internship as a teacher.



*Hello, my name is Alejandra Miranda, and I am part of the team that works with young people at the Oblate Mission at the Maria Inmaculada Parish. My main role is to administer the San Eugenio Scholarship Program.*

*This is an exciting and rewarding year for me, as I am finishing my university studies to be a math teacher. To complete my degree, I am doing an internship in a secondary school. I have 70 students, and I love them all, especially getting to know their different abilities and personalities. I am also working on my thesis requirement, which is entitled "Introduction of the English Language to the Mathematics Class". The idea is that students can learn another language through mathematics, using didactic material. To make the classes fun, music and games like Jeopardy are used. There is even an allowance for inclusive materials for children with disabilities.*

*All this was going so well until COVID 19 hit. We were all set to celebrate International PI Day (March 14) and allow my fellow university students to present their projects. Each class makes games and activities to illustrate something about math. My thesis work is now delayed, since much of it required the direct application to my students. The university students were greatly saddened with the uncertainty of everything. Even graduation is tenuous.*

*I was anxiously awaiting sharing with my family my graduation since I will be the first in my family to graduate with a degree. Maybe I will simply graduate from my living room; no "Alejandra Miranda" over the microphone, no cap and gown, no final handshake, no hoopla over my thesis.*

*Some of my fellow students do not have internet, making continuance of their classes impossible. Some lost a family member to the virus. Some could not afford to pay tuition, since their family income was impacted. All this and I cannot even hug my young students and tell them things are going to get better.*