



Nov 20, 2019 Weekly Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.



This past weekend we had SEARCH #15 where about 90 youths decided to change their lives. We heard and shared stories of attempted suicide, divorced parents, drug abuse, and deaths of loved ones in the family.

From prior retreats, we had over 200 servers, who washed dishes, cleaned rooms, prepared plays, orchestrated dances, cooked, counseled, shared life stories, and so much more. The return-to-serve rate of people who attend these retreats is really high.

Our resident psychologist, Eduardo Lopez, took the initiative to start a new team called Mental Health SEARCH. Their purpose is to watch and listen for attendees who might need special attention and counseling during the retreat. The group is made up of all those students who are majoring in psychology, so they will get some experience in the art of non-judgmental listening. Eduardo envisions the functions of the group growing in other areas like vocational testing to help youths get some ideas on their future. Vocational testing is not common here in Mexico because it is expensive, so that would be a wonderful service to the youth.

This is first retreat where we had a Down Syndrome youth (If you want to play Where's Waldo, he is second row center). His name is Omar and he regularly solos as the altar server at 7 AM weekday masses. It was a great experience about love and respect and that we are all the same in God's eyes, sharing in His love. The slogan of the retreat "Your Love Captivates Me".



I (Rich, coauthor) recently was in anguish having heard my dear friend Sister Wendy, from my hometown in Northern California, was in a coma and not expected to live. I had also heard from another friend that he had received a message from his guardian angel that she had offered her life in exchange for a young boy in the school where she helped out. He was undergoing serious brain surgery for uncontrollable seizures. Having just gone to mass and offered communion and prayers for Sister, I was still feeling pretty low. Then I got a call out of the blue from one of the youth, Karla, inviting me to go to Monte Tabor, a semi-near convent, to attend mass with her

family. This youth had never called me before and had to run down my phone number to even be able to reach me. Masses at Monte Tabor are very beautiful and I thought this might be consoling. After the mass, I decided to share what was going on with me. Karla asked me the name of the person and I said Sister Wendy. She told me that coincidentally this mass was offered for a Sister Wendy. I thought that coincidence was a nice bit of consolation, and thanked our Blessed Mother (since Sister Wendy led me in my consecration to our Blessed Mother 6 years ago). Sister Wendy's coma occurred on the same day as the boy's operation and she died a few days later. I drove 12 hours to attend the funeral. When I walked in the church, there were the nuns from Monte Tabor! It turned out that dear Sister Wendy used to serve at Monte Tabor, and the mass I was not so coincidentally invited to, was indeed for her. Oh, the little boy came through the surgery so well, that he was released early from the hospital, although he won't need a costume for Halloween.



This is Dylan. He is majoring in Nanotechnology, which in English is Nanotechnology (hope that helps). He was the co-director of the SEARCH retreat mentioned above. His sponsors for his scholarship are Richard and Denise Day.