



October 8, 2021 Weekly Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

We were recently introduced to Ana by one of our social ministers. Ana is 40 and moved to Tijuana from the southernmost state of Chiapas trying to find better medical care. She has breast cancer and has been going downhill for 2 years. At first, she would endure the 5-hour bus ride to get treatments, but then COVID came along, and she was not able to get treatment. Riding the bus was a great trial, not only because it was long and crowded, but also because she would get bumped and that was very painful and caused bleeding.



In Tijuana she is living with an uncle and cousins. Her hopes of getting better treatment in Tijuana have not panned out. She posted something on Facebook which led to someone recommending seeking help through the church. A family member attended mass at San Juan Diego chapel and asked Fr. Jesse OMI for a donation so

that she could buy morphine patches to deal with the pain. This was arranged and was the beginning some hope. However, the first time we visited her with our medical student, Karla, she had become even more sad and hopeless because she had gotten worms in the open wound on her breast.

We believe prayers were answered when a doctor in Mexicali suggested a technique of blowing smoke on the wound to get the worms to come out. Receiving some attention and getting her wound cleaned and free of worms revived her spirits. After a few weeks the doctor offered to give her radiation treatment free of charge. The only requirement is that it must be every day for a month. Since Mexicali in a 3-hour drive, we arranged for a place for her to stay and will take her there next week.

Discovering that her bed was wet, we also arranged for a tarp. Her prognosis is probably not good, but her feeling that people care and receiving answers to prayer has given her great comfort.



Our Oblate parish held its first general health fair since COVID nixed gatherings. Several volunteers, some of our youth studying to be doctors, and a few hearing specialists arranged several stations. Blood pressure, glucose levels, and other general health checks were conducted. Several talks were given on nutrition and health. Meals were served to the elderly.

Special attention was given to checking ears and hearing because deafness is the fourth largest disability in Mexico. Wax build-up is a common problem, so cleanings were conducted. Hearing tests were given and 2 or 3 are going to need hearing aids. Fortunately, the Lions Club has a clinic coming later this month where they provide hearing aid services for those with a diagnosis, which our clinic provided. Our students also volunteer at the Lion Club clinic, so Lions are especially cooperative with our clients.



People can purchase a hearing aid for \$185. Even though this price is highly subsidized, it is still out of reach for many of our clients. Maximum Impact, a charitable non-profit that helps in many places, including Tijuana, offered again this year to pick up the cost of the hearing aids.

SEARCH is back...Yeah! After a year and a half, we held our SEARCH retreat again. Before the



pandemic we gave 4 retreats per year: 2 for youth and 2 for adults. We had done all the planning and preparation a year ago last March, but COVID descended, and we had to postpone our beloved retreat.

SEARCH provides a transformative experience. Attendees spend 3 days at the retreat without phone or life's other distractions. Last weekend 60 persons experienced this

opportunity for the first time along with 60 returnees, who do all the work to host the event. Usually, we have twice that number of participants, but because of COVID, we had to scale back. It was bittersweet in that everyone was happy that SEARCH was back, but sad that some people could not attend due to the pandemic.

SEARCH for adults is different than SEARCH for youth. One reason is that adults can have borne scars for decades that need healing. However, once some of those burdens have been lifted, it is so great to see them smiling and dancing and experiencing the joy of youth again.

Eduardo Lopez, our resident psychologist, was the director of SEARCH for Parents #6. Eduardo said, it was especially meaningful for him because his parents attended and were able to work on some things. Adriana, Eduardo's wife, gave the first talk of the retreat and Eduardo gave the last one.



Another example of how parent-child relationships can benefit is that the father of Luis Zepeda, our resident engineer, joined in. Luis's parents separated many years ago. A few years back Luis got the chance to work again with his father on the construction of the new rectory, which was healing. But being with his father at the SEARCH retreat was the especially delightful.



Jesus called His apostles from many backgrounds, and it did not seem to matter what their lives were like before. He just led them in a new and better direction. So it is for the attendees of SEARCH. Most will go on to serve at future retreats as not only a way to pay forward, but also because they want to be part of seeing others' lives transformed.



