



March 6, 2023, Weekly Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

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*“inviting God into their marriage  
would change things”*

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Felix is a 29 year old man who recently married the mother of his 3 children after 9 years living together. His wife works in a factory making \$100 a week and that is what the family lives on.

Felix has a kidney condition requiring him to travel for treatment 3 times a week over the past 7 years. His wife applied to donate one of her kidney's to Felix. So far, the tests look positive, and they are working through the paperwork and need to line up blood donors to help with the cost. That is an area the Oblate parish can help because frequently the youth there will donate blood to help a family.

Felix tells us he must limit his water intake and uses water only to take pills. He has to be on a strict no-salt diet. Limiting water and smelling his neighbors' cooking are a great challenge. He also feels bad that he

cannot eat the same things with his wife and children. Felix recalls that he was angry at God asking “Why me” when he was first diagnosed.

Felix says his 2-year-old toddler motivates him to keep going and try to recover from his illness because he wants to always see her smiling. The family has been coming to church. The social ministers at the church encouraged them to get married. At first Felix resisted but considered that getting married would help with health insurance.



Fr. Lucio Castillo OMI, helped them with pre-marital talks. They really liked hearing that inviting God into their marriage would change things. They also liked the attention the church was giving their family. Given the urgency of the situation, Fr. Lucio was able to make the path to marriage easy and the church community rented a tuxedo for Felix and bought a modest dress for his wife. Another person donated a cake and a small reception.

Sometimes in years past the family might just have tortillas to eat for 2 or 3 days. By working in a tortilla factory, they were allowed to take some leftovers. But today people visit them, bring diapers, medicine, and other supplies. It is often not a lot, but it is very welcome.

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*“she hopes someday they will be able to reunite with the rest of her family.”*

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Blanca Romero is a loving mother of two children, eight and eleven. They live in the community of Rojo Gomez Alto, which is one of the more difficult places in Tijuana to live. The roads are steep, dirt, and very rocky. When it rains, two-wheel cars cannot traverse the roads. But Blanca is happy to have a house of her own and not be paying rent.

Blanca’s husband works in a factory making a minimal salary (usually between \$80 and \$100 a week). He says for 2 years he has been working 7 days a week. He does not mind though, saying Blanca is a good mother for his children and his children are fed and going to school.

Blanca walks her children to school each day, a distance of 5 miles round trip. She laughs and says it is good exercise, however, it is hard to keep the kids in shoes, given the wear and tear and the ever-growing feet.

Blanca and her husband are from the town of Acapulco Guerrero in the south of Mexico. They left there because crime was beginning to rule. Shootings were commonplace, and it was not advisable to be on the street after 4 PM. Once time the criminal element laid out a blanket on the street and told people not to be on the street that afternoon. Blanca did not see the blanket or get the word and went to the store. The criminals starting firing shots into the store. She was terrified and laid on the floor with her children. After the shooting subsided, they ran home. There was more shooting, so they ran into the bathroom and hid.

After a second incident, the family moved to Tijuana. Here they feel welcome, loved, and safe. Blanca says the family often prays together for their hometown, and she hopes someday they will be able to reunite with the rest of her family.

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***“Student of the week.”***

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Gabriela Santos is a second-year psychology student. She has served in our church for 12 years as an altar server and is a leader in our youth group. She envisions that when she finishes her studies, she wants to start a program to help people for free.