



## November 13, 2021 Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

Agustina is a 60-year-old grandmother who has beautiful new twin grandchildren. She told us



that the mother of the twins, her daughter, died two months ago, two weeks after giving birth to the twins. Agustina explained that her daughter was given to a street-life, which caused Agustina much stress and grief. She had tried many ways to rescue her daughter from that life. The daughter had been to rehab three times but ended up with HIV and TB.

The daughter was 40 years old when she gave birth to the twins, who were her 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> children. The twins, Victor and Yesenia, were born two months premature. The mother and the babies were released from the hospital after a week. Agustina

decided not to expose the babies to the mother for fear of their frail condition. The mother, who knew she was dying, begged to see the children just so that she could hug them and say goodbye. Agustina relented and brought Victor and Yesenia to meet their mother for 20 minutes. The mother died the next morning.

Two weeks ago, the family heard that help was available from the nearby church, and they needed diapers and special formula. We were able to help on both accounts. Shortly after meeting the family, we learned one of the babies had a twisted bowel and needed surgery. The surgery was last week. Preparing for the surgery the doctor said the family needed to provide a special cream for the ultrasound. The doctor offered that the baby could stay at the hospital while Agustina went to get it. She refused saying, she is compelled to stay with the baby because she is her memory of her daughter, and she feared another tragedy like happened to her daughter. So, she took the baby with her, and she and her husband got the medicine and returned. Agustina stayed in the hospital with Victor for a week after the surgery, sleeping on the floor next to the crib. At first, she went two days without eating and finally would only go out long enough for a quick bite. With five stitches, Victor is home and recovering well.

Agustina's husband is the only person who works in the household of 13 persons. He sells cellphone accessories. Of course, it is hard to make ends meet. To make matters more challenging, he and Agustina have a 19-year-old special need daughter, and they need diapers and other supplies for her. It was tough visiting the family the first time and seeing the grandfather cry because he was feeling sad, pressured, and responsible for all that has happened. He said that they want to become closer to the church and that the Our Lady of Guadalupe is now taking care of them. He sobbed that she is the mother that they need.

Luz, age 40, came to Tijuana with her son Juan angry at God, fearing for her life, and at wits end



not knowing how to make a living. Her father and her husband had been killed in southern Mexico, and their death was preceded by the killing of Juan's father a year earlier. She says she cries, other times yells at God, and takes anti-anxiety drugs. She has never been by herself and has never had a job. She has 3 other children who are grown and married that she left behind. Organized crime threatened Juan and that is when she left her home state.

She landed in a community within our parish boundaries called Antorcha. Antorcha is a very poor community and there is gang influence there. Luz fears that as her son, now 10, gets older he will get drawn or forced into gangs.

We got involved because of Juan's foot condition. It is a deformity that has gotten worse over the years, causing him to walk awkwardly. Fr. Eleazar OMI had organized a door-to-door canvas of this area because he was newly assigned to the chapel in Antorcha. It was through this canvas that we learned of Juan. It turns out Luz had been contacting various hospitals and had arranged for an operation for Juan next February. The hospital agreed to do the surgery for free, but Luz must pay for the pre-op tests. Even though it is only \$50, she doesn't have it. She has been really stressing over this.

Mildred, one of our part-time psychologists, got involved because we had learned that Luz was having suicidal thoughts. The Oblates have offered to pay for the pre-op tests and other expenses. She is calmer

now. We have invited her to come to church, learn how to forgive, and have hope again.