



## June 29, 2021 Weekly Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.



We asked a couple of our medical student volunteers to write about their experience with our social outreach medical team. Here is our first such offering.

*My name is Isabel Bahena, I am a 9th semester (5th year) medical student. A few months ago, I joined the medical social outreach team of the María Inmaculada Oblate parish. When I joined this program, I did not realize the great impact it would have on the community. Over these months we have been able to help many families who not only needed spiritual or financial help, but also needed medical attention. In Mexico many people do not consider health a priority, since sometimes they must make the decision to buy food versus medications. With this new medical social outreach program, we help people with basic medicine, and when necessary, consultations with specialists.*

*I think that by trying to help these people they have helped me much more.*

*Thanks to this program I have realized many things that are not taught in school: 1) We deal with people, not only with medical conditions, 2) a patient, regardless of what kind of life they have led, has dignity, and deserves respect until the last moment of his life, 3) listening is a very important medicine, and 4) God always has the last word. All these life lessons and life stories I have encountered have made me fall in love even more with the career I have chosen.*



*There are so many stories that have touched my heart that I could not decide which has been the one that has impacted me the most. However, I want to share the story of Nicolas. Senior Nico, as we address him here, is a paralyzed-on-one-side patient because of a stroke. He is bedridden and cannot take care of himself. In our program we have several patients with this condition, but what makes his case different is the fact that he does not have someone to help him try to recover. A neighbor gives him shelter and food. We have changed his diapers and occasionally given him a bath. Our schedule does not permit us to visit him regularly, and it is saddening when we do and he is needing to be cleaned. Thanks to the program Senior Nico is receiving rehabilitation from a student studying physiotherapist. However, the process has been slow since nobody in his house helps him to do his exercises. There have been times when he*



*has wanted to give up, but in the end always convinces himself to keep trying. Although I am limited in what I can do for him, I like to visit because, despite everything, there has not been a day in which he has not given me a smile.*

*Written by Isabel Bahena*

Henry (the shorter one shown) is our newest visitor here at the Oblate mission in Tijuana. He



is 6 years into the process of becoming an Oblate of Mary Immaculate priest. His country, Burma, used to be a British ruled country, but a military coup brought that to an end. Since that happened, Henry tells us that the country has gone downhill with depletion of resources and economic collapse for most. His family became an enemy of the military and had to seek political asylum in Thailand. After 6 years in a refugee camp, they got the chance to come to the US.

Henry has quickly gotten involved with mission activities including the formation house, community outreach, migrant team, choir, and the school for disabled children.

While his Spanish is in its infancy, that does not stop Henry from always greeting people with a hello, smile, and thank you, regardless of whether he is serving them or vice versa. He says in Burma one never passes another without saying “Mingalaba”, which is a way to say hello, goodbye, good day, or good night.

Shown in the picture is Henry and Cisco, a regular helper, delivering water in our community. Many people live in places where running water is not available and delivery of water is difficult and one more expense. We started delivering water last year after visiting a blind lady who had become sick from drinking from a non-potable water source. She explained she did not have the 10 pesos (50 cents) for the 5 gallons of water she needed, and we had been in a hot spell over 100 degrees. So, we got her water and began carrying water with us on our visits.



Henry is familiar with stretching food and water and waiting in long lines from his days in the refugee camp. He also understands what it is to be poor in a country different from where you grew up. Perhaps one could say his formation began long before he decided to enter

religious life, as was the case of his favorite saint, St. Maximilian Kolbe. Henry likes to think he will be the first of many Oblate of Mary Immaculate priests from Burma.



Edgar Guadalupe Gamez Vega is our featured student and is a beneficiary of the scholarship program thanks to Erin Dillon. It would not be otherwise possible for Edgar to attend university because he only has his mother, and she is elderly and can only earn enough to cover the household expenses. Students receiving a scholarship are required to give some hours of community service each semester and Edgar does so by teaching catechism.