

CASA FRANCISCANA OUTREACH

A Ministry of the Franciscan Province of St. Barbara, Serving the Poor in Guaymas

Casa Franciscana News

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**Casa Franciscana
Outreach**
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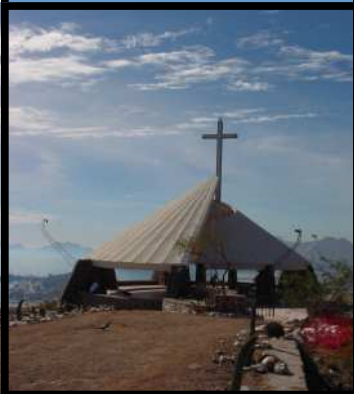
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*Our Lady of the
Angels, Guaymas
Symbol of Hope & Love*



Receiving your Kindness

Fr. Bill Minkel, SFO

Meet Fernando! He began school on August 22nd. It was at "Ilustracion", a Catholic School. The nuns there teach *primaria* (grades 1-6), *secundaria* (7-9) and *preparatorio* (10-12).

He was attending a public school, until about the middle of last year. The victim of bullying, Fernando dropped out of school. It is a phenomenon that is talked about more and more in Mexico. The truth is Fernando had very good grades. Maybe that was why he got picked on. Others may have resented his intelligence or felt as though he was making them look bad.

He dropped out of school and was not planning on going back. His older brother 'Chema' worked at the Meson de Jesus and so Fernando began volunteering there. That is where I got to know him and a little of his background. He is the second of three children and lives just up the hill from me in the 'Monte Lolita' neighborhood.

Fernando says he liked school until the bullying began. His favorite subjects are history, math and he enjoyed learning PowerPoint on the computer. Like most kids his age he enjoys music

- reggae and electronic music are his favorites. He plays soccer with his friends and follows both the Mexican team Club America and the European team Barcelona.

I have observed him working at the Meson de Jesus where we feed breakfast and lunch to about 150 at each meal. He is quiet and thoughtful! When I learned about his situation I wasn't that surprised to hear that he was studious and got good grades.

I have to admit that it was Fr. Jose Luis who asked me if



Jerry's Club had any more spaces available for scholarships. He recognized Fernando's potential and knew something of the background.

Another unfortunate fact is that Fernando has little support at home. His mother does not value education as some parents might. Such an attitude is not uncommon in this area since the quality of public education is fair at best and even those doing better in school do not necessarily do better in the labor market.

Jobs are often determined by

connections, that is, 'who you know.' He says that his step father is not much support either. He talks to his biological father (who lives about 5 hours from Guaymas) once a week. We hope his dad will encourage him in his studies.

So between Jerry Donovan (Jerry's Club), pastor Jose Luis, Lorenia (director at the Meson de Jesus) and myself we have a pretty good team to support Fernando. He will be responsible for helping at the Meson on Saturdays, reporting to Lorenia, Jerry and myself. Jerry attends teacher parent meetings when one of the 'sponsored' youth needs some shaping up!

Fernando understands he has one more support group, **YOU!**

I showed him a copy of the Summer Newsletter and explained that people in the U.S. care about him and will be following his progress.

Thanks on behalf of Jerry and the 9 kids who will have full one-year scholarships. Little things done with great LOVE as Mother Teresa said!

Paz y Bien

Fr. Bill

Pastor Jose Luis

Feeding the Body, Feeding the Soul



Working together
we can make a difference.



Forty-Six years old and ordained just a year and a half ago, Jose Luis Barrios Delgado is completing his first year as pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe here in Guaymas.

The parish, which is one of the oldest of a dozen city parishes, is not one physical building but more like its own mini-deanery. Guadalupe is the main church but the parish also includes 3 other small churches. They all constitute the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

I am happy to be part of the Franciscan team that helps him with the tasks of regular masses (9 on Sunday), catechesis, popular devotions, tending to those who are sick, sacraments of baptism & confession and some counseling. Fr. Yogi, who is the director of the program for Postulants for the Junipero Serra Province, helps along with Fr. Elias (82yrs old) and Fr. Coronado (85yrs old).

Fr. Jose Luis has a lot on his plate due to the many chapels and communities. The popular devotions require that there is at least a 'triduum' of prayer and Mass prior to each patron's feast. In the case of Guadalupe we are talking about a 'novena', or 9 days of services prior. It adds up quickly since each chapel and

church has a patron saint or feast.

The shortage of priests is much more critical in Mexico with something like 1 priest for every 6,000 baptized, compared to the US ratio of 1 to 1,650! Jose Luis often helps in neighboring parishes too. He does this to generate income since our total Sunday collection is around 1200 pesos (@\$100) for all the masses and a normal mass stipend paid to a visiting priest for a daily Mass is 200 pesos (\$2).

As you may know funerals here happen quickly and often. Since embalming is rare most people are buried the day after they've died. When you ask the question "When do you need a priest for the service?" The answer almost always is, "Today!"

Luis brings a good deal of experience to his vocation. He was born and raised in Guadalajara, Jalisco and is in the middle of 6 children, his parents still living in Guadalajara. He joined the Franciscans of the Jalisco Province in 1990 but left after 4 years of formation. Still feeling called to religious life he entered with the Dominicans for 2 years but then rejoined the Franciscans, this time with Junipero Serra Province which covers the north western part of Mexico.

He is full of energy and ideas for this poor but persevering community. He is a believer in the value of catechesis and has instituted a school of study for those ministers who have been helping in the churches and chapels. He's working to improve some of the structures worn out by weather and time. He hopes to install a bathroom in two of the chapels that have none and complete some of the walls that were begun when resources were more plentiful.

Unfortunately yet understandably the parish receives little financial assistance. When Fr. Marty died in 2000 and Fr. John left as pastor some years later, the Santa Barbara Province continued to fund 'Casa Franciscana' but no assistance went to the parish. The parish was turned over to the friars of the Junipero Serra Province, a poor province to work in a poor neighborhood.

As institutions go, the founding vision can get lost or become clouded with the passage of time. Feeding the poor is probably what we do best here. That vision is plain and real. The challenge of Casa Franciscana as an institution is to deliver more services to the poor making best use of the donations entrusted to us. The parish can and should be an important part of that goal. Jose Luis and I agree in many of the ways that this can be done.

Both his Province and my Santa Barbara Province have Chapters (*Chapter is a tri-annual Province gathering to elect leadership and legislate*) this coming winter. We ask your prayers that we might continue in our assignments here as we coordinate our efforts to serve in the spirit of Francis.

Fr. Bill Minkel, OFM



Working together
we can make a difference.

...And To Dust You Shall Return

When people think about poverty in other countries they most likely imagine smiling children without shoes, wooden shacks, or scenes of congested barrios. It is not often they think of mounds of minerals mined from the earth and piled high.

I am talking about mounds that sit about 100 yards from homes and at the edge of a densely populated 'poor' neighborhood. This is the reality for us here in the Punta Arena (sand point) district of Guaymas. Minerals such as iron, copper and coke just to name a few, can be found in large, 150' high mounds just across the street from Casa Franciscana –the edge of our neighborhood.

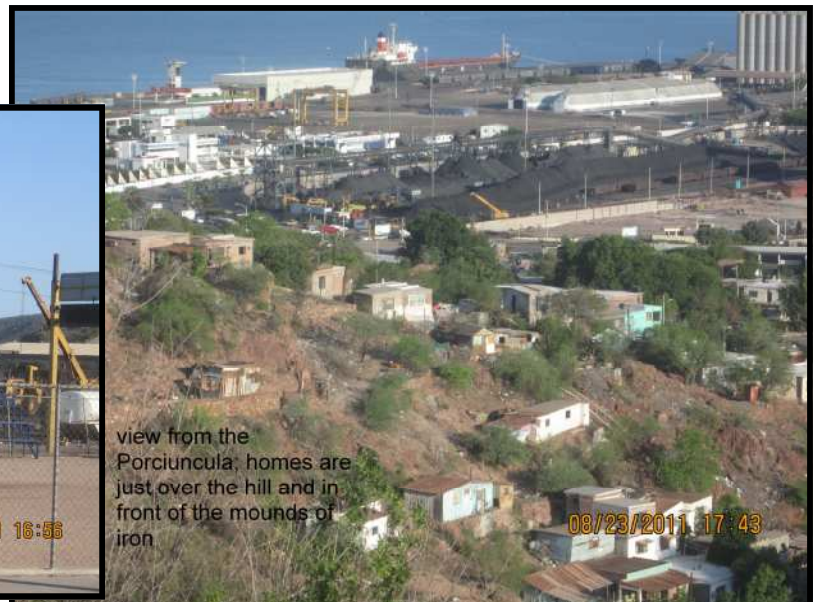
The dust storms of Phoenix have made news lately and, well, that's desert living I guess. Yet being on the coast of a large body of water *and* in a desert makes for some strong and unpredictable winds. We may not be Chicago but things get pretty sandy, dirty and dusty even when the wind is not evident. Sweeping and mopping seem to be the most common pastimes.

The choice of where to allow industry to off-load and store the mined material should take into consideration the people whose health will inevitably be impacted. You really don't need a study of asthmatic children or statistics on the cause of death for the adult population to recognize the effects. All you have to do is visit Guaymas for a week or so. If you are here when the wind gets particularly bad the evidence can be blindingly apparent.

Many in the U.S. talk about downsizing government and eliminating regulatory agencies. Here is just the opposite! Here is Mexico, agency regulation is insufficient and I doubt there is an agency to lend an ear to the concerns of the people here in Punta Arena.

People have been talking about organizing in order to bring the matter to the attention of Municipal officials. I will keep you posted on what develops. Meanwhile we are mindful that all of us will return to dust one day. It just seems that for those who live in poverty, that day comes sooner.

Fr. Bill Minkel, OFM





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Casa Franciscana Mission

Ministries of Hope and Love



Bringing food home to Mom!



Preparing bags of food in the courtyard behind the Casa!



For the elderly, food is delivered to their home!



Volunteers at the Casa Franciscana make it happen!



The bread we take for granted is life to the poor! How can so little make someone so happy?



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Newsletter

Here is my gift of: \$ _____ . Check is enclosed or,
Please charge my gift to: ___ Visa ___ MasterCard ___ American Express

Print Full Name (If Credit Card, as shown on card) If Credit Card (Credit Card Number)

Street, City, State, Zip (If using a Credit Card, it must be the billing address for the credit card)

Expiration Date
Telephone Number (required for Credit Cards) Credit Card Expiration Date (required)

Signature Date

If you would like to designate your gift to a specific program, check a box below:

- Wherever it is most needed
- Children's Education Fund
- High School Fund
- Food for the Poor
- Children's Medical Mission
- Bellas Artes
- Jerry's Club
- Other: _____

In Memory of: _____

Thank you for your generosity

The Casa Franciscana Outreach is a qualified tax-exempt entity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and similar Arizona State Laws. All Contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by those laws. The funds are fully designated and restricted for use under the provisions set forth in the organization's by-laws which specify service to the poor and cannot be used for any other purpose. The Casa Franciscana Outreach tax identification number is 86-0609695.