

Llevando el Evangelio a través del Pan y la Tortilla

Bringing the Gospel by Bread & Tortilla

Chiapas Project Bulletin # 73, May 2024

The Chiapas Project Food Pantry is a biweekly gift of staples (beans, rice, oil, and sugar) to families facing food insecurity in the barrio of the church of San Benito de Nursia, a program that will celebrate its fourth anniversary next November. This month there were three Fridays on which groceries were distributed: May 3rd, 17th and 31st, and Fr. Florencio's photos of families picking up their food have been collected here as a montage. The Food Pantry is a joint venture between the Church of St. Benito in San Cristobal and four Chicago Episcopal churches: St. Chrysostom, Church of Our Saviour, Church of the Atonement and Church of the Holy Comforter. Our relationship falls under the umbrella of the Companionship between the Diocese of Chicago and Diocese of Southeast Mexico that began almost 25 years ago. Below are the groceries ready for distribution alternate Fridays this month.



May 3rd



May
17th

May 31st



Every two weeks, when food is distributed, Fr. Florencio sends photos of the families and their food, his way of assuring us in Chicago that every penny we send is being carefully used to provision his neighbors.

May 31st



Our Food Pantry makes it possible for San Benito de Nursia (possibly the poorest parish in the Diocese which, itself, is the least advantaged in the Provenance of Mexico) to provide food for forty-five families in their neighborhood. About ten families have removed themselves as pantry recipients as their circumstances have improved during the past three years, and new families have taken their place.

May 3rd



Our combined efforts in May, pictured on these three pages (about 2/3 of the recipients), probably delivered 650 meals. The cost for May's three food pantries for our four churches in Chicago was \$724 (an average of \$181/church).



May
17th



April's visit revisited.

I asked our April travelers from Atonement if one of them might want to add a reflection to last month's summary of their first visit to our sister churches.

Richard Benson sent the following:

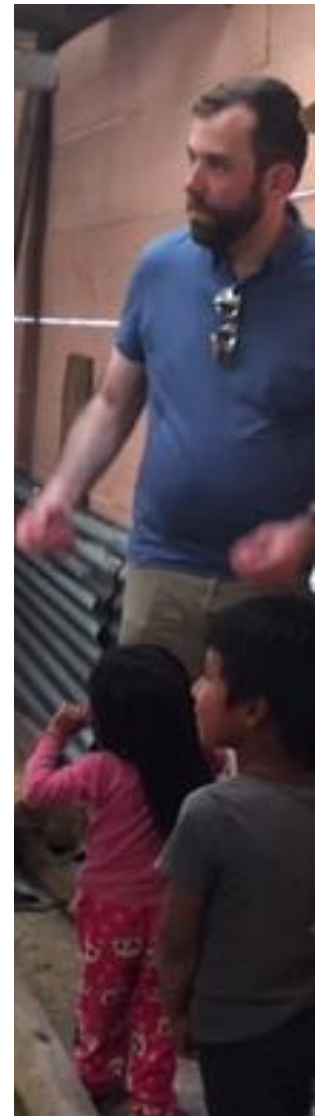


I was gratified to be a part of Atonement's first visit to our sister churches in Chiapas; this trip became, as I had hoped, more of a retreat than a vacation that led me into deeper relations with my fellow parishioners and a whole new world of friendships with my brothers and sisters in Christ in our companion churches.

Most important, God revealed himself on this trip. We shared in worship in wonderful ways in both San Cristobal and in the highlands in Yochib. I will always treasure sitting with Fr. Florencio in morning prayer, and later singing with the congregations.

At first, I felt inadequate. All I had to contribute was a gift of two prayer books, my conversational Spanish, and a singing voice. But I came to appreciate that there really is a ministry of *presence*. Just being with people, sharing and reciprocating their love, and doing your best to get to know them – this is a Christian virtue unto itself. And in return our friends in Chiapas showered their hospitality upon us, from meals and a soccer game to a mariachi celebration. Chiapas is a beautiful and, I think for all of us, blessed place.

Notes for future travelers: pack lightly and with good walking shoes. There are plenty of *lavanderias* to wash your clothes; you can then have more room for gifts! The Pimsleur app helped me grow my conversational Spanish skills before travel. Don't listen to people who perceive Chiapas as risky. Mexicans themselves vacation in San Cristobal. Be prepared to rest, see beauty in nature and the kindness of people, make new friends, and be transformed. I can't wait to go back. (consulte la página 11 para ver la traducción)



Reports from Yochib



May 4: Carlos writes:
When Fanny and I arrived at San Marcos we found the children on the road waiting for us. We went up to the church and started with the entrance song and the reading (let the children come to me). Later, the kids captured in a mural what we understood



about what Jesus tells us in the reading. Afterwards, we went down for a small get-together with laughter and piñatas for the children who attended the class, (they

broke their piñatas - a fire truck and a gift box for the children). Everyone participated, and they were given a sandwich and juice, at the end we broke the piñatas and there was a cleanup of the church. Father Florencio arrived as we were cleaning up. Thank you again for your support for the children's celebration.



May 18: Carlos writes: When I arrived Fr. Florencio was already in the church working with the catechism class. When he finished, we began with our usual entrance song and we gathered at for a reading of a very special book many of you know well, with a message that resonated well with



the children: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. You remember it talks about the stages that caterpillars (and children) go through during their growth until they become

beautiful butterflies, which for the kids meant the conclusion of their school studies. After the reading we reflected on the stages of our little lives, and at the end they drew with watercolor and colors what they learned. When they returned to the church, they enjoyed bread with juice, and we raffled off some toys for the group.



Sunday Mass

Mass at San Mateo, May 5th



Mass at San Benito May 5th



Mass at San Benito May 26th



Father Florencio sends us weekly pictures of the mass at each church, but space permits only a few of them in this newsletter. This month on May 26th the congregation at San Benito welcomed an Anglican visitor from Chile, Mr. Cristhian, who is pictured here with Estaban and has expressed his interest in participating in the life of the parish in San Cristobal.



Richard Benson's message (p. 5): Les pregunté a nuestros viajeros de abril de Expiación si alguno de ellos podría agregar una reflexión al resumen del mes pasado de su primera visita a nuestras iglesias hermanas. Richard Benson envió lo siguiente:

Me sentí gratificado de ser parte de la primera visita de Expiación a nuestras iglesias hermanas en Chiapas; este viaje se convirtió, como esperaba, más en un retiro que en unas vacaciones que me llevaron a relaciones más profundas con mis compañeros feligreses y a un mundo completamente nuevo de amistades con mis hermanos y hermanas en Cristo en nuestras iglesias compañeras

Lo más importante es que Dios se reveló a sí mismo en este viaje. Compartimos la adoración de maneras maravillosas tanto en San Cristóbal como en las tierras altas de Yochib. Siempre atesoraré sentarme con el P. Florencio en la oración de la mañana y luego cantar con las congregaciones.

Al principio, me sentí inadecuada. Todo lo que tenía para contribuir era un regalo de dos libros de oraciones, mi español conversacional y una voz para cantar. Pero llegué a apreciar que realmente hay un ministerio de presencia. El simple hecho de estar con la gente, compartir y corresponder a su amor, y hacer todo lo posible para conocerlos, es una virtud cristiana en sí misma. Y a cambio, nuestros amigos en Chiapas nos colmaron de hospitalidad, desde comidas y un partido de fútbol hasta una celebración de mariachis. Chiapas es un lugar hermoso y, creo que para todos nosotros, bendecido.

Notas para futuros viajeros: empaca ligero y con buenos zapatos para caminar. Hay muchas lavanderías para lavar la ropa; ¡Así podrás tener más espacio para los regalos! La aplicación Pimsleur me ayudó a desarrollar mis habilidades conversacionales en español antes de viajar. No escuches a las personas que perciben a Chiapas como un lugar riesgoso. Los propios mexicanos vacacionan en San Cristóbal. Prepárate para descansar, ver la belleza en la naturaleza y la amabilidad de las personas, hacer nuevos amigos y ser transformado. No puedo esperar para volver.