

Mexico Parish Partnership 2020

2020 is the twelfth year of our Mexico outreach, and ninth year working with Padre Bayron. Sadly, the COVID pandemic has forced us to cancel most of our activities for the year, and for many of the activities in Padre Bayron's churches described in this report to be curtailed. We continue to keep in touch with Padre Bayron and to continue our financial support. We hope and pray that it will not be long before we can resume our personal contacts and rejoice in the wonderful work Padre Bayron continues to do in Cuernavaca.

Our last visit to Mexico was in January 2019; Padre Bayron visited All Saints' for a week that May including Cinco de Mayo. He spent his time in Chicago participating in the Sunday services, had a discussion during coffee hour, meeting with several small groups of parishioners, helping with our Tuesday night food pantry. He even had time to do a few tourist activities. Moneys raised during his visit helped his congregations to purchase Bibles, a white board and a sound system for the children, to purchase additional tables and chairs as well as a cover for the patio, and to support a tutoring program that was eventually dropped due to lack of support from the Mexican congregation. Also, money from All Saints' was used to purchase an evaporative cooler for Bayron's house.

All Saints' contributes funds from our annual budget to cover about one third of Padre Bayron's very small stipend. The Diocese of Cuernavaca contributes about one third as does the congregation of San Pablo. The congregation of Santísima Trinidad is small, not terribly active and in a poor area, and has not been able to contribute to his stipend. They do cover the operating expenses of the congregation, and Padre Bayron has been working with them to encourage them to become more self-sufficient. Several individuals in the US also help Bayron to pay for his family's medical insurance and automobile expenses.

Bayron's congregations, especially San Pablo, have experienced tremendous growth in attendance and activities since he arrived in Cuernavaca in August 2017:



August 13, 2017

Padre Bayron's First Sunday at San Pablo



November 19, 2019

There is an active Sunday School program at both congregations and a youth group at San Pablo. In 2019 San Pablo had 25 confirmations – more than in any other church in the Diocese of Cuernavaca. People are being urged to use their Bibles in the Eucharists and to participate more in Bayron's Sunday reflections which are more of a discussion than a typical sermon. More and more people are contributing to these discussions. A group of adult members are meeting regularly to learn more about the Church and

how to draw closer to God. The congregations continue to distribute sandwiches monthly at one of the local hospitals. The number of lay leaders and the level of their participation has significantly increased.

Various classes have been started to both enrich the lives of the people in the congregations and to encourage others to visit the church. These have included tailoring classes (an All Saints' parishioner donated one of the sewing machines used in the class), language classes, self-awareness classes and music classes. A number of participants in the music classes have joined the congregation and the church choir. Special services have included a Backpack Blessing and Pet Blessing as well as the more traditional Three Kings' Day, Parents' Days, Día de los Muertos. Children's activities have included recycling and program to teach children how to save and manage money.

Please contact Dave or Karen Howe if you would like more information or to become involved in the All Saints' Mexico Outreach.