

Uh oh...Now what do we do?

Dear Mission Friends:

As you may know, my primary residence is currently our mission parish in Mexicali where, a few years ago, thanks to your loving support, we were able to construct a parish house which comfortably accommodates our community of Dominican friars while also providing areas for group and individual counseling and rooms for visiting and seminarian missionaries. Such ideal living quarters have served to invigorate our missionaries in maintaining the parish's vital ministries for the elderly and the youth, the poor and the abandoned.

We often collaborate with a local community of Dominican sisters whose living conditions, however, have been much less than ideal. The three sisters' home was not only in general disrepair but also too cramped to receive any visitors seeking counseling or to accommodate any new sisters in a diocese whose need for evangelizing is only growing.

Maintaining the energy and positivity demanded by their



Fr. Martin Walsh, O.P., Sr. Maria de la Luz Oseguera, O.P., and Sr. Olivia Gutiérrez Vega, O.P., discussing finances over morning coffee in the sisters' new dining room.

ministries, most of which focus on our often-troubled youth, had been, therefore, a daily—though characteristically silent—struggle for them.

Recently though, a community of sisters dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe informed me, as Vicar of Religious for the Diocese of Mexicali, that they would be leaving the diocese because of a lack of vocations and that their convent would be available for sale. A bittersweet day for them, to be sure, but a blessed day for our Dominican sisters! I immediately visited the convent which, like our sisters' home, was badly in need of repairs, but because it was much larger, investing in its necessary improvements would be much wiser.

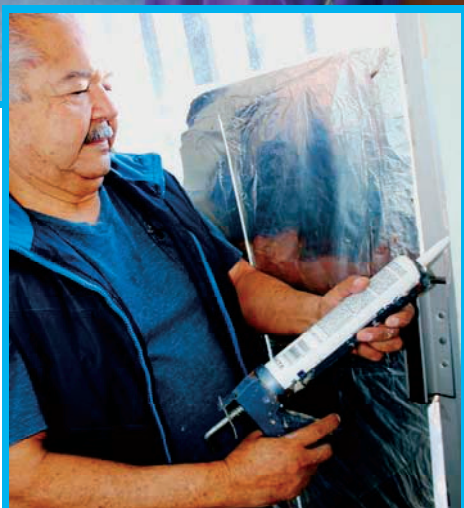
And so, in spite of having no spare funds, the enterprising sisters, trusting in Divine Providence and in the intercession of all of the Dominican saints—and in my promise to appeal to you!—made arrangements with the Guadalupe sisters to take possession of the building, paying rent that could be used toward its future purchase.

The sisters have already welcomed a new member to their small community, with plans for several more. As expected, their ministries, which span four parishes, are being carried out with renewed zeal and enthusiasm. We are grateful for any support you can contribute toward their ongoing repairs and eventual purchase of their “new” fixer upper.

In Christ's Peace,
Fr. Martin de Porres Walsh, O.P.



Posing on the welcoming front porch of their new convent, the sisters are beaming, and not just because of the sunshine! Left to right are Sr. Lidia Hernandez, O.P., Sr. Luz, Sr. Ildelisa Villarruel, O.P., and Sr. Olivia. Middle left, the sisters are thrilled with their new home's chapel with its stunning stained glass window juxtaposed with traditional cherished images of Our Blessed Mother and her Son; a place of refuge and contemplation, they gather here for morning and evening devotions, dashing in separate directions all day in between. To the right, Sr. Lidia meditates to Sr. Ilde's calming guitar accompaniment during prayers. Bottom left is one of their earthly saviors, Vicente Ochoa, a jack-of-all-trades who helped to ready the convent for its new occupants; he continues to show up in his free time armed with his caulking gun and tool box to fight the cracked windows, leaking pipes, and all the needed repairs that any older, neglected house continually demands. To the right, Vicente takes a well-deserved break with Sr. Olivia and Fr. Martin.



Each of the four sisters serves at a different parish in Mexicali and in varying pastoral ministries according to her talents, but they all radiate a welcome aura of joy and enthusiasm to their communities, and they are in turn widely beloved and respected. Each sister has enjoyed particular success with the youth, teaching such Christian values as self-respect and service, as many of the parents have either abandoned them or must work long days to simply keep them fed; and also with young adults, typically floundering and questioning their faith. Having grown up with the persistent suffering and poverty of their communities, and now, through social media, observing the materialism enjoyed by their U.S. peers, they can be easy prey for gangs involved in crime and drugs. The sisters' loving guidance inspires them to be strong and make smart choices.

Top right, Sr. Ilde lends her musical expertise to the children's choir at her parish, *Resurrección del Señor*. Directly right, her joy in interacting with her students is clear as she teaches the faith to a class of young catachumens. Below, while no taller than any of her students, she is a force to reckon with and one can be assured that each student has been well prepared to accept the sacraments.



With her perpetual smile and energetic spirit, Sr. Olivia too, left and above, enjoys much success in her work with the youth of her parish, *Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación*, and they certainly enjoy her.



More big smiles, from Sr. Lidia's groups at her parish, *Espíritu Santo*, top, middle left, and bottom; and from Sr. Luz and her happy teens at *Mater Dolorosa*, right. With great strength and tenacity, kindness and empathy, in word and in deed, all the sisters convey the joyful, uplifting Good News of Jesus to communities weighed down by continuous bad news. Muchas gracias, dear Sisters—your smiles are contagious!

