



missionary testimony: **Alberto Solís**

Aiding Migrants in Chiapas

"I met these three brothers on their journey to the United States in search of work and a better life..."

There is another migratory movement that has taken place lately, children and young people leave their homes in search of work, but mainly in search of their families, desiring to meet their mother, father, sisters or brothers since they have been alone in a family member's home or a friend's where they sometimes suffer from abuse and neglect. It is like the case of these three children who I met in Tuxtla Chico, working as shoe polishers. Two of them are from Guatemala and the other one is from El Salvador. They met in Guatemala and since then they have joined in their journey to the United States.

They told me that their journey has been hard, in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panamá), they can travel without a problem between countries until the gangs, and mafias realize that they are migrants then they require money from them to move from one country to another, taking away the fruit of their labor which they use to buy food and travel. They sleep often in the parks or sometimes there are families who open their homes to them on their

journey providing food, shelter, clothing, and sometimes shoes to keep walking.

"And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me."

Matthew 18:5

When I spoke to them I recommended that the more healthy and safe route is staying close to the cities and finding accommodations in churches, where we can gladly give food and a place to sleep. I brought the boys to the house of my relatives in Tuxtla Chico and gave them food and shelter, and I talked to them about the dangers that they will run into if they continue their travel to the USA, urging that the most healthy and safe route is returning to their countries of origin, and searching for their relatives there.

Two of them are Catholic and one Christian, we talked about what God is looking for in each of us and what the mission in our lives is, about the values we must preserve in the current world, and the importance of living close to our families.

It is sad to hear their concerns at their young age, Esteban is 12 years-old, Juventino and Armando are 11 years-old. They told me that their father moved first and then he sent for their mother second. They carry addresses where their families live in California.

They have been in Tuxtla Chico for three weeks, and I have not been able to convince them to return home. Their goal remains: to see their families even though it means there will be many days of sufferings and passing through dangerous cities in Mexico, especially the stretch from Tapachula to Arriaga. Someone told them it would be safest to take a train to Coatzacoalcos and then follow the road because they are children, and to always look for Catholic Churches, because they will be given food, clothing, and shelter there. I cannot convince them otherwise. It is not a safe journey.

To see these children it is to see Christ asking us to help, they need our words, our love, to give them food, clothes, shelter but above all hope.

When they said goodbye we were in disbelief by their departure, even though we offered them a dignified life, to grow up in a family environment, have an education, values, love... yet their desire to see their relatives was stronger. We pray to God for each one of the migrants who pass through our country that they are safe from the evils that lurk in their daily walk, that people with good hearts give them support in their difficult days and that all parishes open their doors to the homeless giving them food, clothing, and a word of hope: that God is with them and He has not forgotten them."

Catholic World Mission is proud to stand by amazing men and women like Alberto Solís. Through the support of our donors, we provide ETC missionaries with the means to continue serving communities in need.



Esteban, Juventino, and Armando shining shoes to get money for their trip to America.