

DESERT BLOOMS

November 2017



People often comment that it's odd, even sad, that we set aside just one day of the year to officially "give thanks". At Santo Niño we give thanks every day. When we circle up and hold hands to pray before

lunch we always thank God for the food we are about to lift to our mouths, for all that God has given us and for all that God has not given to us. Although various mothers take turns offering prayers of petition and gratitude, this prayer is inevitably in the roster.

For some, the noon meal at Santo Niño is the highlight of the day. Tania, Isidra and whoever is near the kitchen in the early morning are always occupied chopping vegetables and making salsa. A big pot of soup served with rice and warm corn tortillas is a favorite meal. The Sisters are in charge of the dessert which is usually rice krispie treats (no crumbs!), cookies or brownies but on Saturdays we have ice cream cones!



Some of our children need a pureed diet so we always have a mixed fruit "smoothie" for them. Their mothers are expert at spooning or pouring the food into their waiting mouths and catching what comes back

out. It is a skill and requires a lot of patience! Children in the U.S. would often have a feeding tube to help provide adequate nutrition and prevent aspiration pneumonia but that is not commonly available in Juarez.

We give thanks for mothers who are valiant women, often bearing the burden of child care alone. We give thanks for grandmothers who assume the responsibilities of raising their special grandchildren when mothers must work. In one recent situation, a grandmother came to Santo Niño with her daughter and granddaughter. Jocelyn, the daughter, has a recurring neurologic condition that has not yet been diagnosed but we suspect multiple sclerosis. She is unable to care for her toddler so while Jocelyn receives therapies, Grandma keeps the child occupied and helps prepare lunch at the center. The husband and father of the baby found the situation too "embarrassing" and so he disappeared some weeks ago. Jocelyn and her mother frequently remind each other (and us) that God will never abandon them and will give them the strength they need to bear any burden.

We are privileged to accompany these women and children who are the "widows and orphans" of our time. They are God's special ones and we draw close to God when we are close to them.

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