



BAJA CALIFORNIA -MISSION-

FEBRUARY
06TH 2026

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STAYING WHEN FEW STAY



While many homes were filled with lights, family dinners, and Christmas and New Year celebrations, a group of young people made a different decision: to leave their homes, families, and traditions to go out and encounter a community that needed something more than a celebration. They chose to spend the Christmas and New Year holiday weeks serving others and, proclaiming Christ, while staying close to the people where few stay.

Valle de la Trinidad is a community located in a rural, agricultural area, somewhat off the beaten track, in the middle of the Baja peninsula. Oblate Fr. Bob Callahan and Oblate Brother Peter Vasquez had already served here in the 1980's. The Oblate presence left a mark there: churches, community spaces, and above all, faith communities, accompanied and sustained by the Oblates who closely worked with the people. Over the years, that reality has changed. Today, the communities of Valle de Trinidad face a deep need for spiritual accompaniment. Many people have felt alone in their faith journey—not because of a lack of desire, but because of the need for a closer and more vigorous missionary presence to walk with them.

A small group arrived on this mission a few days before Christmas, willing to leave behind comfort in order to accompany the somewhat neglected communities. This was not only a pastoral mission, but also an experience of vocational discernment: living, even for a few days, what it means to give one's life to God and accompany those most in need.

The first reality check came quickly. At the first Mass celebrated with the community, the church was almost empty—only a mother and her two daughters were present. The silence of the church spoke louder than any words. It was not indifference; it was a sign of spiritual need.

The next day, home visits began. Under the rain, the team walked the streets, personally inviting people to participate in the activities. When the time came, the response was minimal. The pews remained empty. The effort seemed unanswered. It was a difficult moment—humanly discouraging. It became clear that this mission would not be easy and that the spiritual need was deeper than expected.



Despite the challenges, the missionaries did not give up. They continued knocking on doors, walking the streets, sharing invitations, flyers, and announcing each gathering with patience and perseverance. It was not about coercing, but about staying and persevering.

As the days passed, something began to change. Slowly, doors started to open. Children arrived. Young people gathered. Adults came closer. The community began to reunite, and nearly 70 people participated in the later gatherings. At the farewell Mass, the atmosphere was no longer the same as at the beginning: there were more faces, more openness, and above all, more hope.

This mission not only touched the community—it also transformed those who went. Seeing the impact missionaries can have on the faith of so many people stirred deep questions and reaffirmed vocational calls. It confirmed that bringing Christ is not an event, but a constant, missionary presence—and that is precisely where the Oblate charism finds its meaning: going to the poorest and most abandoned, to those on the margins.

None of this would be possible without those who believe in and sustain these missions. Every affiliate, every seminarian, every priest was able to be there thanks to a silent network of support that makes it possible for the Gospel to reach places where few go.

To invest in these missions is to invest in communities longing to feel like Church again. Because when someone chooses to stay and serve where few stay, something begins to be reborn. Faith is rekindled, hope returns, and a community once again knows it is not alone.



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A VOCATION THAT HAS NOT BEEN BROKEN



Adrián learned very early that life can hurt. In his childhood, he carried a deep wound that should never have existed—a violence and abuse that is not easy to name and that he kept silent for years. He grew up surrounded by absence, confusion, and the constant feeling that no one was going to take care of him.

For a long time, the pain found no words. It found movement. Boxing came into his life when he was 12, at a stage when the only important thing was to endure. Over time, however, he realized that not everything could be resolved with punches; there were things inside that remained disordered. When he was 15, taekwondo appeared almost without him looking for it. Movement stopped being just reaction and became discipline, structure, and a path. Without knowing it, he was beginning to transform his wound into strength.

Something unexpected happened there. Taekwondo did not come alone. The instructor who welcomed him was a young Catholic deeply committed to the Search movement. He did not just teach him how to train; he trusted him from the beginning and treated him with a dignity. Adrián was not used to receiving. Little by little, he realized he was not alone—many of the young people training with him also walked together in faith and supported one another.

Through that group, Adrián experienced Search retreat #12, an experience that marked a before and after in his life. For the first time, he clearly heard that his life had value and that God had never forgotten him. For years, he had grown up hearing at home that he was useless, that he was a hopeless case. Search shattered that deep lie, and for the first time, he understood that he could aspire to more and believe in a different future.

With the support of the San Eugenio Scholarship Program, a door opened that he had believed had been closed for years. Adrián discovered that he could study and began his training to become a Registered Nurse. He chose this path not for comfort, but out of vocation: to serve others, especially those most in need.



From that point on, the strength he had learned to build was no longer just for survival—his strength was to serve others. Over the years, Adrián grew in discipline and perseverance until he became a black belt and eventually an instructor. He never forgot where he came from. He understood that if someone had trusted him when he had nothing to offer, he could do the same for others. He began accompanying children and young people. On the mat, he did not only teach techniques; he taught limits, respect, and dignity. Adrián did not seek to form champions—he sought to ensure that no one else would grow up feeling alone as he once did.

At the same time, his faith took shape in everyday life. He joined the choir, youth groups, and Search movement, where he continues forming himself as a leader.

Recently, while training his students, a bad movement caused a serious knee injury. Adrián now needs surgery—an intervention that cannot be postponed and costs \$4,500 dollars. Suddenly, the one who had always supported others had to take a step back.

This story is not just about a needed surgery. It is about a vocation that was not broken by pain. It is about someone who decided that his past would not define his future. Your support does more than cover a medical procedure—it allows a leader to continue accompanying young people, serving the community, and transforming lives through his dedication.

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