



MARIA MADRE DE LOS POBRES (MARY, MOTHER OF THE POOR) AND YOU!

Maria Madre de los Pobres (or “Mary, Mother of the Poor”) is a large Catholic parish in La Chacra, an area on the edges of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador. Most of the people in the parish make their living by selling tortillas, bread, fruit, or used clothing on the street, in the big market or on buses. Some have jobs in shops and restaurants in other parts of the city or in places like the local car wash. Some have studied at the University and are teachers or other professionals. Some have had to leave the community and country because they couldn’t get work or because the gangs in the area threatened or hurt them or their families. Some have come to the United States because they have family here and they need to be together.



Like Holy Trinity, Maria Madre is a large parish with a school. Besides a school, the parish has a clinic, dentist’s office, after school program and a place for grandmas and grandpas to go for meals and company. There are scholarship programs for the high school and college students and religion classes and clubs for children and teens after Mass on Sunday.. Some of the children in the parish have godparents from El Salvador, Germany, Spain or the United States. This means that someone helps to pay for their tuition and school supplies and encourages them to do their best. If godparents want to, they can go with others from Holy Trinity to El Salvador to meet their godchild - and many have. It’s fun!

The parish school has students from 6 months to grade 6. The younger children eat breakfast and lunch at the school which makes it really special. The older children bring snacks for their break, but because their classes begin at 7 and end at noon, they have lunch when they go home. They have classes in reading, PE (a favorite class), religion, math, science, English and even computers.

Since the pandemic began last March, the students have had to do their classes virtually from home. This has been a big challenge for everyone. Very, very few families have a computer and, even if they do, it is very expensive to buy internet access (which is not very good in La Chacra anyway). Most families have a cell phone, but they usually are not smartphones and it costs a lot of money to buy minutes for them. Almost everybody shares a bedroom with brothers and sisters or cousins, and it’s often hard to find a quiet place to work. Can you imagine how hard it would be to do your classes without internet and a place to study? Fortunately, the teachers really want to help their students, so they try to make and deliver paper copies of all their lessons. This is not easy during a pandemic!

The money you raise from your tag day and other activities will help the students at Maria Madre study and learn.



\$15 will pay a teacher for copies of lessons for one month

\$30 will pay for a student’s internet access or cell phone minutes

\$100 will pay for better internet for the school and parish area for one month

\$200 will help pay for a tablet or chrome book

Thank you very much for all you are doing to help our friends in El Salvador!