

CLARK PRAYER UPDATE AND CALENDAR

January/February 2025

AMOR Divino Uruapan, November, 2024

Thank you for your prayers! The Lord gave us a large group of enthusiastic believers to help distribute gospels of John and tracts to one third more of the homes in Uruapan. We obtained permission from the city to do evening presentations in the central park. This in itself was a miracle, as it did not look favorable at first. The Lord opened hearts and gave us many fruitful conversations, along with several contacts who have begun Bible studies in their homes with Nathan and Keyla. Praise the Lord with us for His gracious answers to our prayers! We hope to carry out one more large AMOR Divino outreach to finish the city of Uruapan (second largest city in Michoacán state), the beginning of June, Lord willing.



Daily group devotional times in our perfect outdoor meeting place



Nathan, Keyla and Shebita



Group prayer times



Offering gospels of John at each door



Braving the ever-present dog threat!
(At least these were behind the gate!)



...and this one was pretty small



These could only bark...





← AMOR Divino team the last day

Mime team at the park
↓



Sight-seeing in Uruapan



Family camp November, 2024



Juan baptizing his daughter, Lidia, last day of camp

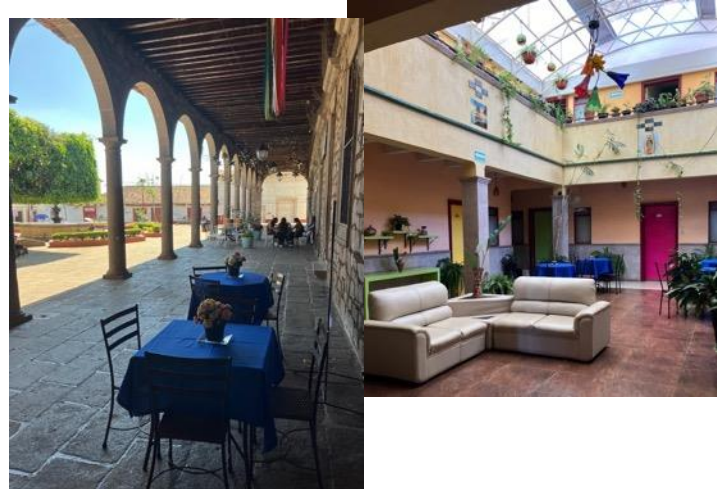
CLARK PRAYER CALENDAR, JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2025

JANUARY 1-11 Pray for our Parents in Action camp the 10-11 of January. Pray for wisdom in preparing the camp the week before. Pray that the God of encouragement would strengthen and encourage the hearts of all the parents participating, that they would be enabled to love, train and discipline their children this year according to the wisdom and leading of the Lord, and that God would be continually working in the hearts of the children to bring them to Himself.

JANUARY 12-18 Please continue to pray with us for all those who received the gospel in some form during AMOR Divino in Uruapan. Pray that the seed would remain in their hearts and grow and bear fruit someday. Pray for wisdom, grace, love for souls and encouragement for Nathan and Keyla as they continue to follow up on the contacts who desired a Bible study, as well as teaching their former studies and reaching out with the gospel in this city.

JANUARY 19-25 This week, a large work team from Arkansas will be helping us with countless, desperately needed repairs, improvements and small building projects around the camp. Please pray for wisdom, strength and protection and for the blessing of the Lord on this effort, for His glory.

JANUARY 26-31 We will be working on all the preparations this week for a smaller AMOR Divino outreach in the small city of Tacámbaro, which is around 2 hours south of where we live. It will be a smaller group of believers (perhaps 50 or so), and we are hoping to cover the town with gospels during our 5 days there. We need so much wisdom and strength from the Lord in preparation for this event. We need His leading and provision. Pray that He would bring us exactly the believers we need to help us and that He would be preparing the hearts of each one who will be hearing the gospel and receiving the material at their doors. The photos on the right show some views of the small hotel we have rented for our group in this picturesque, colonial town of Tacámbaro.



FEBRUARY 1-8 We so desperately need your prayers this week as we work to bring the gospel to this place (Tacámbaro). Pray for the Lord's blessing on every aspect, for strength and health for each worker, for wisdom, love, grace, and boldness. Pray for the Lord to open the hearts of each person who will be in contact with us. Pray for their blind eyes to be opened to the truth. Pray that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ may shine on them.

FEBRUARY 9-15 Please pray with us this week for Annie and the variety of ministries the Lord has given her. She has begun a program to disciple young girls in our church. She wants to continue to develop her writing ministry, for the Lord's glory, and to be continually involved in evangelism. Pray that the Lord would encourage her heart and give her great passion for each task He gives her. Pray for wisdom and the Lord's leading for her in every situation and opportunity. Pray that the Lord's joy would be her strength and that she would find contentment in the work He has for her. *(Annie is going to begin sending updates of her own with more details and prayer requests about her life and work. If you would like to receive her updates, please send us your name, and we will pass it on to her with your email. If you have WhatsApp, that would be an ideal means for her to use too).*

FEBRUARY 16-22 Sometime this week, Lord willing, Nathan and Keyla are expecting the birth of our 10th grandchild. Please pray for the Lord's lovingkindness and blessing to give them a good birth and a healthy baby. Pray for great encouragement for them to continue strong in the Lord's work in Uruapan. Pray for the Lord's provision of a better home to rent...their current house is connected on the back side to a party hall and every weekend, they must try to sleep with ear-splitting, demonic "music" shaking the house.

FEBRUARY 23-28 In December, the Lord gave us the opportunity as a church to do 3 evangelistic Christmas outreaches at the camp and we were amazed at the good number of guests that attended on each occasion. Also, Annie and our boys, along with some other missionary friends were able to get permission at parks in 3 different cities, to do a little Christmas concert and present the gospel as well. Pretty good-sized crowds showed up in a couple of the parks. All these people clearly heard the gospel and we ask you to pray for the salvation of souls as a result. (See pictures below).



Our stable had two live donkeys and a sheep!



Prayer time before a park concert



Practice session



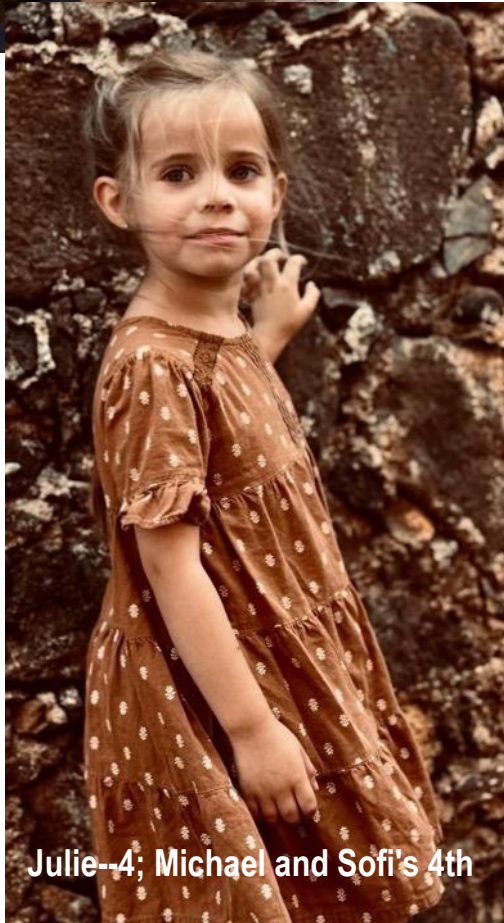
Central plaza in Morelia



Katie and Annie



Shebita--10 mos.
Nathan and Keyla's first



Julie--4; Michael and Sofi's 4th



Annie with Emmy
(Regis and Katie's 3rd)

Jemimah--8; Michael and Sofi's
2nd, with Emmy



Katie with Ella--3



Julie (4) with Levi (6)
(Michael's 3rd and 4th)



Annie with Emmy
(8 mos.)



Celebrating Grandma ("Macki's") and Jemimah's birthdays together



What a treat it has been to have Ted's mom, Judy Clark, visiting us for Christmas! (right with Caleb)

(Below), Annie receiving dear friends from England, Steve and Judy Buckeridge





With Shebita



Christmas cookies with Aunt Annie and Granny

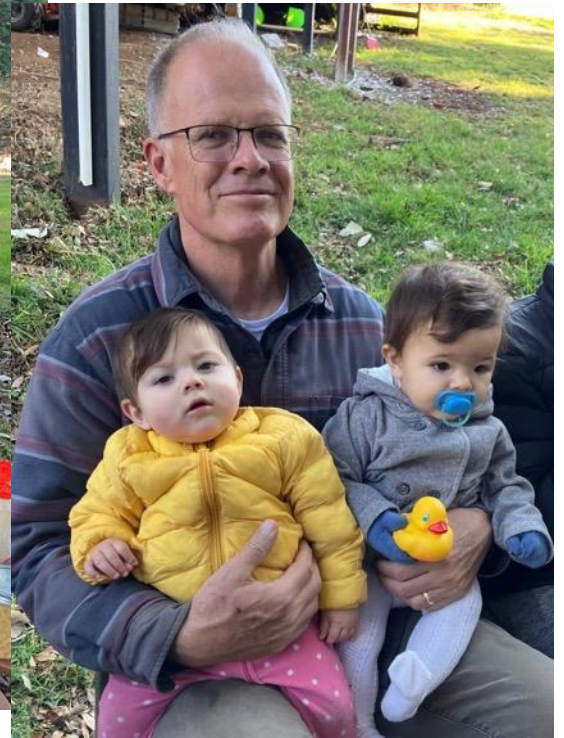


Owen, Ella and Emmy



With Michael and Sofi and family



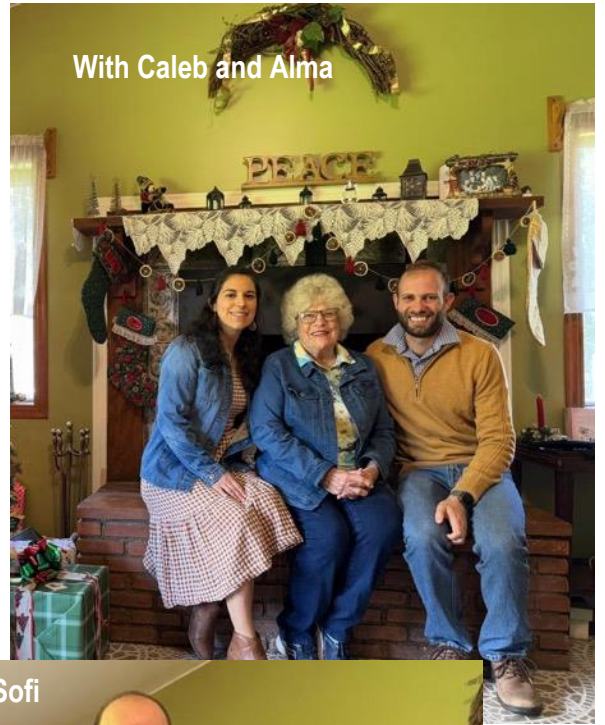


Granny with all 9 of our grandkids

With Nathan and Keyla and Shebita



With Caleb and Alma



With Annie



With Michael and Sofi and family



With Regis and Katie
and family





ANA'S STORY

By Katie Clark

Ana's eyes darted back and forth between the door to her bedroom and the cup she held tightly in her hands. The fumes of the Clorox were sickening, but Ana didn't care. All of her misery would soon be over, she consoled herself. With that, she took one last look at the door to make sure the coast was clear, and carefully lifted the cup to her mouth, forcing the harsh chemical down. Immediately she could feel a burning sensation in her throat and abdomen. Her head began to spin, and her vision started to blurr. Her body instantly began trying to expel the foreign liquid. Ana fought desperately to keep from vomiting. In her mind she kept repeating to herself, 'Just a few more minutes.' But finally she could stand it no longer. She groaned in pain before finally collapsing to the ground.

11 years earlier...

"We'll come back for you. We promise." The young couple kissed their small daughter goodbye and handed her over to the care of her maternal grandmother.

The two-year-old was too young to understand what this farewell would entail, but the effects of it on her life would be long-lasting.

That was the last time Ana saw her parents. Untrue to their promise, they never returned for their daughter. On the pretense of needing to provide more stable financial support for the family, Ana's parents had gone to the United States to work, but finding a more comfortable life for themselves there, they had simply decided to stay and let the grandmother raise their child back in Mexico. Once in the United States the couple had quarreled and parted ways. They each began their own lives, caring little for what happened in their daughter's life.

"Knock, knock, knock..."

"Who could that be at this hour of the night?" a woman's irritated voice could be heard from the other side of the metal door.

"Knock, knock, knock." The urgent plea sounded again.

"Oh, I'm coming," grumbled the woman as she shuffled over to the entrance of her humble dwelling, bellyaching the whole while about how cold it was and how little sleep she got.

When she finally opened the door, two wide-eyed little girls, no older than 8 and 10 years of age stood in the doorway shivering.

“Please m’am,” began the older of the two. “Genaro’s drugged up and we’re scared he’ll hit us again like he did the other night. Please, m’am, could we stay here the night?”

“We’ll leave first thing in the morning.” Added Ana from behind her cousin, hoping their neighbor would understand their predicament and show them mercy.

“Well that’s not my problem,” huffed the woman, putting her hands on her hips. “Where’s your grandmother anyway? She should teach that boy a lesson.”

“Both her and mother are working.” explained Ana’s cousin Griselda.

“We don’t know when they’ll be home.” continued Ana. “Sometimes they don’t come home until the next day.”

At this, the woman softened somewhat and finally agreed to allow the girls to stay the night.

Times were hard for Ana during these childhood years. Confining 12 people into one household was a hardship for any family, not to add to that burden the kinds of people who inhabited the house.

Ana’s grandmother was a very superstitious woman who trusted inherently in the word of the witch doctor. Times without number she would visit him seeking a cure for her children’s problems—most of which included alcohol and drugs. Every time, the witch doctor would charge her a small fortune for his remedies and cures. And every time the poor woman sank deeper and deeper into debt. Needless to say, not one of the witch doctor’s remedies did a bit of good to help, but Ana’s grandmother was so desperate she kept going back, convinced that perhaps this time, things would be different.

Ana’s cousin, Genaro, who was Griselda’s older brother, was involved in drugs from a young age, and would become aggressive when under their influence.

As Ana grew, so did her desire for a family she could call her own. As she watched the kids around her who came from “normal” families with daddies and mommies, she couldn’t help but long for a “normal” family herself.

The question of why her own parents had abandoned her plagued Ana. Was there something wrong with her? Did they not love her as most daddies and mommies normally do their little girls?

She never found a satisfactory answer to this question. She became very discontent with life and a feeling of emptiness crept over the little girl.

The neighborhood children peered cautiously through the windows into an ornately decorated library. Inside they saw more books than any of them had ever seen in their entire lives. It was rare for the children to have much excitement in their small neighborhood, so when they heard that a retired philosophy teacher had moved into the community, they instantly were curious by this rarity and decided to go all together to check it out.

As they peeked, the professor entered the room and spotted the children spying on him. Realizing they had been discovered, Ana, along with all the other children quickly lowered their faces from the glass and scrambled away as fast as they could.

However the professor quickly exited his house and called for the children to return. One by one, they cautiously peeked out from their hiding places, unsure what to make of the old man's invitation. What if it were a trap? Some bravely ventured out into the open and cautiously approached the house from behind. Ana's curiosity finally got the better of her and she valiantly walked up to the professor.

"What is your name child?" asked the man.

"Ana," came the reply.

By now the other children had gotten up courage to join Ana in her conversation with their new neighbor.

"Have you read all those books?" ventured Ana looking past him at the volumes and volumes of books lining the walls of his library.

"Not all of them." he responded simply. "Do you know how to read?" he inquired.

"No sir." Ana answered truthfully.

The older man thought for a moment, then said, "Tell you what, you come to my house every afternoon and I'll teach you how to read. Then you can borrow all the books you want from my library. You can't take them home, but you can come read them here. How does that sound?"

Ana's eyes got big. That sounded wonderful.

The next few months Ana faithfully went every afternoon to the professor's home where, true to his word, he taught her to read. Once she had mastered the art of reading and became an exceptionally fluent reader, the next part of their deal went into effect.

As she surveyed the shelves with wide-eyed amazement, her eyes fell on a title that piqued her curiosity. The professor followed her gaze and reached for the dusty copy of "The Slave" and handed it to Ana.

"This book will help you find freedom from whatever it is that plagues your soul." He assured enticingly.

Ana looked up at him hopefully. Could this book really contain the answers she sought? She was more than ready to find out.

Ana devoured the book. The experiences of the protagonist sounded so similar to her own. Surely, she could overcome her struggles in the same way as he had—through self-exertion and strong emotions. Finally Ana knew she had found answers. Or so she thought.

Due to this professor's influence in her life, Ana became an avid reader and was constantly returning to the old man's house for more books. Books became a sort of haven for Ana in which she could escape from the gnawing pain of reality and run to a make-believe world of philosophy in which everything worked perfectly every time.

As all of these philosophical ideas began to sink in, Ana soon decided there was no room in her thinking for God. He simply could not fit in with the traumas Ana had lived in the past, nor with what she now was learning about philosophy.

The professor himself fed this sentiment with his common phrase, "It's enough just to look around to realize that God doesn't exist."

At the age of 9, Ana declared herself a full-fledged atheist.

Despite the refuge she had found in books, it could not last forever and the young girl found herself constantly feeling empty and lonely.

With no authorities to keep her accountable, she decided to try the wild life of parties and alcohol to fill the void. She did everything her flesh felt inclined to do. It was all fun while it lasted. The problem was that it never lasted long enough. At the end of it, she was always just as empty as she had started out, or rather, emptier than before.

"Help! Genaro!" screamed the woman hysterically. "Come quickly!" she cried. Genaro ran to his mother's side and stared down at his cousin lying in her arms. "What happened?" "How should I know!" the poor woman was sobbing uncontrollably, unsure what to do. "Quick, help me get her down the stairs. We can take her to the hospital in a taxi." ordered Genaro, taking control of the situation.

"What have you done, Ana?" she could hear her aunt's voice wailing. "What have you done?" Although she had collapsed from the pain, she had not lost consciousness and could hear everything going on around her. *'I've lost my only out!'* the thought went over and over in Ana's mind as she was rushed to the hospital. Death had seemed sweeter than life, for life contained no purpose, no love, no peace for Ana. But now she had lost her chance. She felt worse than she had ever felt in her entire existence.

Once at the hospital, she was immediately admitted. However the disdain of the nurses and doctors who treated her was obvious. "Why didn't she just go ahead and kill herself." they mocked disdainfully. Ana felt wretched. Everything was against her. She had no reason to keep on living, but even death seemed to flee from the despondent 13-year-old.

Ana awaited her turn nervously in the line of penitents at the Catholic church. Her views on God had not changed from when she was 9, however her grandmother's words caused her to reconsider. On that fateful night in the hospital only a few weeks earlier, she had told her grandmother she couldn't go on. She felt utterly alone and could see no purpose in life. The older woman assured her granddaughter that the only solution was to start going to Mass. Ana would need to confess her sin to the priest, for it was common knowledge for all good Catholics that God doesn't listen to sinners.

After waiting some time, Ana's turn finally arrived. Although it was terribly embarrassing having to tell the priest what she had tried to do, Ana was hopeful it would provide some relief from the guilt she felt. However, as she walked out of church that day, supposedly a forgiven person, she felt no different than she had when she had entered. She did not feel forgiven, nor did she sense the peace she so longed for. Seeing no other

alternative, she returned the following Sunday and got back in line to confess her sin to the priest again. Maybe this time she would feel forgiven. After several weeks of following this same procedure, with no visible results, the priest had finally had it with her. As he saw Ana approach the confessional the following Sunday morning, he stuck his head out from behind the purple curtains and shook his finger at her. Ana looked at the priest in bewilderment.

“I’m not going to hear any more confessions from you until you have something new to confess.” He said in an exasperated tone of voice. Ana turned away in disbelief. As she exited the church, she could feel the anger rising within her. *‘What kind of God is this, who can’t forgive me every time I feel guilty? What kind of God would reject me when I come to Him for forgiveness just because I need new sins every time I come?’* These thoughts spun bitterly in Ana’s mind as she found her way home.

“I was right.” she declared defiantly as she entered the kitchen where her grandmother was busy heating tortillas. “I knew God didn’t exist and I’ve just proved it.” She added adamantly. “And I don’t ever want to hear about Him again.” she stormed out of the kitchen, disillusionment written all over her face. After trying everything imaginable to fill the void in her life, Ana had turned to her final recourse—religion, and now even this had given way to a bottomless pit in which she now found herself with absolutely no way out. There was nowhere to turn, nothing new to try. She had exhausted her chances and was now convinced that happiness and peace were unattainable...at least for her.

...But then came Jesus

“We’ve begun studying the Bible every week with some people who came and knocked on our door.” announced Ana’s uncle. At this, several of the young people at the family dinner made some jeering remarks, while some of the older family members looked with concern at the uncle and inquired what religion these people taught.

‘Well it sure doesn’t sound Catholic.’ Ana thought to herself as she continued silently eating her soup. *‘Maybe they believe in some new god I’ve never heard of. I should go to the studies, hear them out, and none of what they say will make a lick of sense.’*

At the end of the dinner, Ana approached her uncle. She wanted to know what kind of people gave the Bible studies. What books did they use? What time were the studies on Monday?

The following Monday at 6:55 p.m., a little white Vento pulled up in front of Ana’s uncle’s house.

The study was unlike anything Ana had ever experienced. What these Christian people taught actually made sense. This annoyed her, for she could not catch them in any wrong statement or word. Whenever she asked a controversial question with the intention of exposing them, they would always patiently answer her questions in a very logical and loving way. This impacted Ana greatly.

When she was 15, the couple who gave the Bible studies invited her to a summer camp for young girls. Upon arriving at the camp, she was instantly taken aback by everyone’s kindness to her. Some of the girls even looked happy!

‘Well that’s sure dumb.’ Ana thought to herself. *‘No one can actually be as happy as those girls look. They must be bluffing.’*

Just to prove her point, she purposefully would kick certain girls during soccer to see if they'd get mad. Ana became increasingly frustrated, however, when she couldn't get a reaction from the girls she had kicked. They seemed just as happy as before.

She finally had to admit that their happiness was genuine. And she couldn't help but long for it herself.

As she sat through teaching after teaching, one theme was repeatedly emphasized--God loved us so much he had sent His own Son, Jesus to be born as a human being. Jesus, unlike any other man, had lived a perfect, sinless life. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23) He had no sin of His own for which to die, but, because of His great love for mankind, He willingly took the punishment for our sin upon Himself. By His death He offered us eternal life.

This message totally shattered Ana's worldview. After that week, she went home convinced there was a God and that He cared about her. However, she couldn't ignore the guilt she still felt over her sin. And since she had been taught that God does not listen to sinners, she doubted there was any way God would listen to her after what she had done.

One day as she read her Bible, she came to Hebrews 9:14, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Ana's heart skipped a beat. That verse felt like cool water to a thirsty soul. Jesus' blood could cleanse her conscience from the sin that plagued her. He was able. And much to her relief, when she came to Him, she also found Him willing.

That day Ana became a new creation. She had passed out of death, into life. Jesus had come and found her in that hopeless pit of despair. He had lifted her up and washed her clean. In Him she found all she had ever wanted. A Father! A family! Happiness! Her circumstances were of little importance now. She had life and life in abundance!

4 years later...

Ana leaned back in her hospital bed; her arm immobilized by a sling. Since the age of 13, she had repeatedly had problems with her shoulder dislocating.

After several excruciating hours in the hospital, her shoulder was finally put back in its place. As we prepared to leave, Ana walked up to the kind nurse who had treated her and said, "You know, the last time I was in an emergency room, was because I tried committing suicide. That was an awful experience. This time, my experience has been totally different. And it's because I'm a Christian now." She went on to tell him of the change Jesus had made in her life and thanked him for his kindness to her.

There was no disputing the fact that Ana was a changed person. From the angry, bitter teenager I first met at camp, to the sweet, happy person I know now, there is no doubt—Jesus made the difference.

Epilogue:

Ana, currently 20 years of age, is living with a Christian family in the north of Mexico, helping them with the schooling of their children. She desires to serve the Lord with her life and has a heart to disciple young girls.

