

October 17, 2021

The Dinner Tables Are Altars

I simply can't get The Patients of a Saint out of my mind. Here is a little more of my closing narration:

In my 16 days in Peru, I saw a lot of suffering.
But in the midst of the suffering,
I saw tremendous joy
and extraordinary willpower
directed at overcoming terrible handicaps.

These kids are inspiring.

But during my first few days in
Hogar San Francisco de Asís,
seeing so many sick kids was overwhelming
and a bit frightening

There were blind kids, kids with tuberculosis, leukemia,
cerebral palsy, malnutrition, and
a host of severe birth defects,
such as cleft palates, missing or malformed limbs.

There were kids who had been burned
or had their bodies mangled as the result of accidents.
There were kids in body casts from the waist down.

And, of course, there is Victor,
the little boy who has no arms and only one good leg.

In the nursery, there were about 10 infants,
a least one of whom would always be crying.

All I could see and hear was the suffering.

But slowly, I began to see the person behind the illness.

And what amazing kids these were.

I saw countless tender moments
of one sick kid helping, carrying or comforting
another sick kid.

I think the kids have learned an important lesson:

suffering teaches us to love,
and to be kind, compassionate and
sensitive to the struggles of others.
Suffering is a school for growth...
and Dr. Tony's kids are at the top of the class.

I do not understand why so many kids
suffer from so many dreadful diseases.

I shall never understand.

But my hunch is that the road to God
goes through Chaclacayo,
goes through every place on earth
where there is suffering.

Because God does not like suffering,
the road to God goes through humanity,
and the road is paved
by works of mercy and compassion,
acts of love which bring relief to the suffering
that all life must bear
because of our separation from God.

At Hogar San Francisco de Asís,
the dinner tables are altars,
and each child is a priest.
And within every moment of kindness
we catch a glimpse of eternity.

On the morning I left for the airport and my flight home,
I found it difficult to leave.

I had to fight back a tear when little Victor
waved his foot in a goodbye gesture
and many of the kids hugged and kissed me.
Sixteen days earlier, I entered an amazing world
created by an amazing man
and now I was having a hard time leaving.

Earthquake Relief

The sisters in Les Cayes sent photos of the temporary school they built with the money we sent to them.





And "Lilly" sent this photo of her three kids and her niece in their new home.



Moïse

Last night, I was giving Moïse his baby bottle with water. He didn't want it. So, I pretended I was drinking it. He took the bottle from me and tried to put it my mouth. He continues to spend much of his day rearranging my office.

