

November 21, 2021

Water

Over the years, I've written a lot in the Journal about water...or, more specifically, about the lack of water. It is so easy to say a home has no running water, but the lived reality is very hard. In American and most of the world, clean, safe water is piped into most homes and businesses. In Haiti, every drop of water used by anyone must be trucked in and delivered by either really old tank trucks carrying water not fit for drinking or by trucks carrying jugs of pure water. This is on my mind at this time because earlier in the week, our reservoir was empty. There was no water for bathing or doing laundry. Our toilets could not be flushed. The reservoir was dry because the delivery truck had no fuel to operate it. Fortunately, our lack of water lasted only a few hours before the truck was able to deliver water. They had to make two trips to fill the reservoir.

Every day, from my balcony, I see people and kids struggling to haul water home. The homes of the poor do not have reservoirs. Back in the summer of 2010, I lived for a few weeks in a home without indoor plumbing. But it did have a toilet. However, it was flushed by pouring a bucket of water in it. Where did the waste go? Just outside the wall of the house. The stench was not pleasant. Many people still use buckets to defecate.

The old delivery trucks, many dating back to the 1960's, spew plumes of thick black exhaust. They go so slowly over the bad roads they cause traffic jams. Worse, they frequently break down, often that worst possible place. In our neighborhood, which is only accessed by a narrow dirt road, if a water truck is delivering water, you must sit and wait until the delivery is completed. This seems to happen at least once every trip.

On Tuesday, I will easily have all the hot and cold water I need without any effort. Today, I'm off to the airport for the Covid test.

SANTA CHIARA
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