

Vocero San Benito José



The Newsletter of the St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center

SUMMER 2011, ISSUE 12

MIRACLES

by Fr. Francis Mary Roaldi, CFR

I confess that I have a great propensity to rush. So often, whether in our friary, traveling, or at San Benito Jose, I tend to have my eyes on the goal and I miss truly significant things around me.

Thankfully God often will put people or little things in my path to slow me down and remind me what is really important. This is what happened one February day of this year. I was moving at my normal pace from the front gate of the clinic to go upstairs to our administrative offices and attend to business matters. On my way by I smiled and greeted the poor people waiting to be attended, but as I reached the staircase, two people in my peripheral vision caught my attention.

They were an elderly couple, waiting at the pharmacy window for some medication prescribed by our own Dr. Carlos. Immediately I knew they were campesinos or "country folks." After one has lived in Honduras a little while, the distinct dress, bearing, speech and a certain look in the faces reveals individuals as being from remote mountain villages. They are, in diverse ways, a real treasure.

This particular couple just drew me to them. Whether it was his weather beaten

sombrero, or her unusual sunglasses, I do not know, but my heart was tugged. So I slowed myself down, turned around and greeted them. Like so many of the people that travel hours to reach San Benito, they were nothing but gracious and grateful. As the conversation continued I inquired as to the reason for their visit: was one of them very sick, or just a check up? The wife explained a few problems her husband had and then mentioned that she was there for a follow-up visit. This is normal procedure for San Benito following our surgical brigades. After the surgeons return to the States, the doctors that we have at San Benito schedule post surgical visits to make certain the recovery is going well.

This particular woman had had surgery in January when two eye surgeons came and performed cataract surgeries for an entire week. She recounted her story to me in a most humble, but joyful way. She told me, "Father, for years I've been losing my sight [due to the severe cataracts she had in both eyes]. And one day, once I had completely lost my sight, I went to our little chapel and I knelt down and prayed, 'Lord, how am I going to read your Word if you let me go blind like this! You need to give me back my sight!' And now father I came here, and your doctors helped me, and I can see again."

I was totally taken aback by the simple faith which surrounded

her whole story. This little old lady's plea to be able to read the bible again, asking God for His help, and seeing His hand in the little miracle she received at the hands of US surgeons in January of this year. She had literally come into San Benito blind, and left being able to see again. It is a miracle Jesus regularly performed on many individuals 2000 years ago, and for this woman, it happened again.

My one regret is that as I closed the conversation (much more joyful and edified from the whole encounter) I failed to remember their names. Nevertheless, as I ascended the stairs to my administrative tasks, I did so with a new lightness. I was so grateful for having encountered, once again, how God chooses to do good through San Benito and all the many people who generously offer their time, talents and money to make the work possible. It is truly a beautiful work and a light for many of the poorest of the poor in Honduras.

As for myself, I continue to hope that I may learn my lesson to slow down a bit more - to stop and listen more frequently - and in all of it to encounter once again the miracles God does in so many lives every day.



Childspring International, an organization based in Atlanta, has been a supporter of SBJ for many years! Pictured here are a few of the children who we were able to help thanks to the generosity of Childspring.

Thank You

for your extraordinary generosity!

- St. Raphael Parish, Lehigh Acres, FL
- National Philanthropic Trust
 - Dr. John Kelley
 - Dr. Constantine Kokenes
 - Justin Murphy
 - Joseph & Lucy Allison
- St. Francis de Sales Church, Purcellville, Virginia
- St. Paul's Church, Kenmore, NY
 - Colleen Conlon
 - Jim & Marie Dengler
- Andrew & Kimberly Roaldi
- Kenneth Rodriguez
- Mary O'Connell
- St. Luke's Church, Stockton, CA
- St. Joseph's Church, Modesto, CA
 - US Military Base - Soto Cano
 - Comayagua Health Department

Patient Statistics

	Medical Consults	Dental	Mountain Missions	Surgeries	St. Gerard Pre- and Post-Natal Care
average per month	1000	225	40	65 (per surgical brigade)	110

Upcoming Medical Missions

September 4 - 10, 2011
 October 23 - 29, 2011
 February 5 - 12, 2012
 March 4 - 10, 2012

Please contact us for information and requirements for visiting professionals.

The St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center, a free surgical center and basic health clinic for the poor, is a joint effort of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal (franciscanfriars.com) and Light of the World Charities (lightoftheworldcharities.com), and operates under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Comayagua, Honduras. www.sbjhonduras.com



We Need Your Help!

Our most urgent need at this time is for financial contributions to help meet our basic operating expenses.

Medical supplies such as surgical packs, sutures, medications, gloves, drapes and any other supplies typically used in an operating room are needed for visiting medical teams.

If you can help, please contact us. Thank you for your generosity!

Honduras Contact Information:

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Donations may be made payable and mailed to:

Franciscan Mission Outreach
 PO Box 1073, Secaucus, NJ 07096-1073
 we are now able to accept credit card donations through PayPal - see our website: sbjhonduras.com
 973-222-8493 • sbjhonduras@gmail.com

Patient Profile



Pedro Alberto is even more beautiful and charming in real life than in this picture (if you can believe that). Here he is pictured with Linda Mendelson, a nurse who has traveled to Honduras many times to offer both her skilled care and wonderful smile to the poor. A difference that anyone who has met Pedro would note about his depiction in this photo and his normal appearance is that he always is seen wearing a baseball cap. The reason is because he has a horrendous tumor growing out of the back of his head. As one can imagine, it is the most shocking thing to see such a calm, handsome face, and then such a heart wrenching image on just the other side of his head.

Pedro and his mother have traveled a few times from their home in El Progreso to San Benito, looking for assistance. They came to the most recent surgical mission to have Pedro's head looked at once again. After examinations at San Benito and consulting outside hospitals, it was determined that he cannot be helped at our clinic. The reason is simply that the surgery that is required would be too extensive - both a plastic surgeon, as well as a neurosurgeon would need to be present because of the location of the growth and the way it emerges from his skull. San Benito and its associates have decided to attempt to make it possible that Pedro could go to the United States to receive the needed surgery. Such a trip is not easy, but it seems to be the only way to assist him. Both Pedro and his family are very hopeful to find some way of helping him - please pray that it may be possible.

Shown here is Dr. Constantine Kokenes, an Anesthesiologist from Atlanta, Georgia, with one of the smallest patients he has ever encountered. It is a particularly delicate task to put such a small baby to sleep for surgery, but Constantine is not only a skilled professional, but a gentle one as well.



Here is one of the many little ones that wait on the benches of San Benito, with the hope of receiving assistance to lead a healthier and more fruitful life. This young boy, with a growth defect affecting his right ankle and foot, is waiting to be seen by Dr. John Kelly (pictured above, right), an orthopedic surgeon who has been a regular member of surgical missions for many years.

A few times a year, a group of nurses travel to Honduras to do a mission in some of the remote mountain villages. During their weeklong mission, they provide inoculations and basic medical care for hundreds of patients. The nursing team is accompanied by Dr. Carlos, our full-time doctor at SBJ, and Dr. Abimael, who generously donates his time to help. These photos were taken at one of the rustic work settings.

