

Vocero San Benito José



The Newsletter of the St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center

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THANKFUL

by Fr. Francis Mary Roaldi, CFR

Naturally enough, I had never heard of Pica. I was newly arrived to Honduras, as well as only recently initiated into my work at St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center, and so many of the things medical that have occurred are far beyond my very limited scope of knowledge. Nevertheless, as the four nurses continued to discuss their day, and the two cases of Pica, I felt my stomach drop.

The occasion of the nurses' presence was the first ever nursing brigade done at St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center. Judy Craig, Linda Mendelson, Jeanne Teter and Bridget Lane found a very generous benefactor to finance their trip down. Along with SBJ's own Dr. Carlos, for five days they attended patients in remote villages where there is next to no medical care. For hours on end they sat under trees or simple shelters examining patients, and then, having done a great deal of preliminary work, they sent them through to Dr. Carlos so he could make a final assessment. Each day dozens of people were welcomed with a smile and treated. Dr. Carlos, who regularly travels to mountain villages to care for people, considered the whole week a success.

At the end of each day the nurses and the brothers had a chance to share a meal and

chat about the day. While many of the stories were interesting, I must admit, the one I've referred to at the beginning of this article has stayed with me over many months - and I now share it with you. Pica, the condition the nurses mentioned, is a vitamin or iron deficiency. They diagnosed it by what the children were eating: one sand, the other dirt. Listening to their conversation, I was in a state of shock. There was part of me that simply could not believe that within a short drive from the friary there were children eating sand and dirt for lack of proper food. Yes, I live a relatively simple lifestyle, but certainly at a level of comfort and security far above what those little ones will ever know.



It is common that the people who receive care come to know a real blessing through the experience. It is also common to hear how wonderfully affected are those who give such care. Certainly, the nurses pictured here, working in a schoolhouse turned doctor's office, offered testimony to exactly that experience.

To what does the realization of such realities lead one? To question God? Yes, perhaps. To feel pangs of guilt at having an abundance when others have so little? Yes, again, a very natural reaction. I sincerely hope I continue to be challenged by the poverty and need of those around me, without ever thinking or imagining that I have all the answers or even *could* have all the answers. I am not God - nor should I pretend to be.

This heartbreaking story also led me to a further reflection: thank God the nurses came. Thank God they took the time to come to Honduras, give their professional help for a week, traveling through the mountains to reach the poor, the pregnant, the malnourished, the struggling, and the hurt. Thank God SBJ is able to be a constant presence of mercy for so many.

Every day that I walk from our friary here in Comayagua to the medical center, there is invariably a line of people waiting to be seen by the doctors - thirty, forty, or fifty strong. Young and old, men, women, and children all come, five days a week, eight hours a day, almost every week of the year. I am grateful for the small role I play in a place that impacts positively the lives of so many. I am so grateful for your role in keeping SBJ going exactly for those folks that line up each day. You keep SBJ going for all the people who are operated on during the surgical missions. And of course, you keep SBJ going for those two little kids up in the mountains of Honduras, who we'll never meet, but who were treated one April day by four generous nurses. On behalf of all of these people, thank you very much.

Please continue to keep us in your prayers. We need them to help us do not just good work, but God's work. I sincerely thank you ahead of time for your prayers and financial support. Please know that we commend you, your families and your needs to God. May God bless you and keep you.

Thank You

for your extraordinary generosity!

- St. Raphael Parish, Lehigh Acres, FL
 - Margil House of Studies
- Richard & Janet Wolfe Family Foundation
- National Philanthropic Trust
 - Dr. John Kelley
 - Dr. Constantine Kokenes
 - Dr. Richard Seeger
- Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Toronto
 - Colleen Conlon
 - Arthur & Mary Roaldi
 - Kenneth Rodriguez
 - Mary O'Connell
 - Warren & Judy Seely
 - Anthony D'Andrea
- 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

October 24 - 30, 2010

January 23 - 29, 2011

Feb. 27 - March 5, 2011

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.

The St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center has a tight budget, economizes as much as possible without sacrificing anything essential, and receives as many donations of supplies as we can. However, significant operating costs remain such as salaries, utilities, transportation, and medicines and other supplies that are not donated by benefactors.

Honduras Contact Information:

Centro Médico San Benito José
Apartado 234, Comayagua, Honduras, C.A.
011-504-772-6689
sanbenitose@gmail.com

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



△ While professional expertise is a necessary aspect of the work at St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center, the loving touch is also essential. Pictured here, Beth Compitello embraces Luis, a young boy who received cochlear implant surgery by Light of the World doctors a few years ago.



△ Here the latest Light of the World surgical team poses for a shot. The group was composed of people of various creeds, expertise, and backgrounds. They were, however, as always, united with a firm purpose of committed service to the very poor, free of charge, with dedication and, as can be seen, a smile.

▷ Our most recent medical mission brought us the skills of (l-r) Dr. Rick Seeger, Dr. Constantine Kokenes, and Dr. John Kelley. They arrived in June for a week of surgery, and brought with them a team of volunteers from Mary Our Queen Parish in Georgia.



◁ ¡Bienvenidos! St. Benedict Joseph Medical Center is delighted to welcome two newcomers. Pictured here with Fr. Francis Mary, CFR, is Doctor Angela Maria Rivera Calix, the newest addition to the medical personnel at SBJ. Fr. Francis has recently arrived in Honduras and will be ministering at the medical center.



In the Gospel, it is often the smallest and most vulnerable that Jesus chooses, embraces, and heals. In the photo above, Jeanne Teter holds one of the many little ones that were helped during the nursing mission in the mountains of Honduras.

Patient Profile

Noé (in English, "Noah") first came to know the friars at the age of 13. He was a part of a program run for boys and young men in Comayagua called the Compañeros de Cristo. As the program changed Noé lost touch with the brothers. Sometime after this he moved to Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. While riding a bicycle in December of 2008 a bullet came out of nowhere and struck him in the back. He still has no idea how or why he was shot. After a month he left the hospital paralyzed from the middle of the chest down, and with a terrible bed sore.

He returned to Comayagua, and eventually the brothers regained contact with him. One of the friars, Br. Damiano, aided the healing of the bed sore through regular cleaning and dressing of the wound. Finally, a special machine to keep the sore clean was loaned to assist Noé - all told the healing process still took over a year. Along with the medical care, the friar priests began to minister the sacraments to Noé, and a process of spiritual deepening took place in his life.

Most recently, during one of the surgical brigades at SBJ, Dr. John Kelly was able to perform a surgery which will allow Noé to bend his legs and be seated. Previous to this his hip joints were fused in such a way as to preclude all bending. This surgery means that Noé will not be restricted to lie in a bed all day long. While it may not seem like the most significant thing, for a 21 year old man, even the chance to be seated for part of a day, or to be able to travel sitting in a car, is a wonderful advance.

After the surgery, the nurses commented how joyful he was through the whole process. The truth is he smiles all the time. In the midst of his suffering, he is a beautiful example of patience, acceptance of God's will in hard situations, and joy. As for himself, he is exceptionally grateful for San Benito and the difference the surgery will make in his life.



After surgery at SBJ this past June, today Noe is able to sit! We will be working on getting him a special wheel chair that will allow him to go outside. In the photo with him is his girlfriend who has stayed with him and cared for him since his accident. Please keep Noe in your prayers.