

Dear all, I hope all is well with you, and life is as good as it can be in the midst of surging numbers of Covid-19 in many places.

This year has been quite a year and it has brought so many challenges for so many, me included. I am still in Honduras ministering to migrants, many of the people have become stranded in countries where they were when the lockdowns happened. Here in Honduras as you probably have heard caravans of people are still trying to leave the country. since the pandemic began there have been three attempts, the first one with about 200 people to the last one with over 4000 people trying to leave the country because of the lack of jobs, medical attention, and so many other reasons.

I am doing good, in good health and taking one day at a time. The last few weeks have reminded me of what I saw in a movie a while back when one character told another, "if you want to make God laugh tell him your plans". I thought I had a lot of things figure out and then everything went in another direction. Life finds a way to show you were you are needed the most in the end.

About ten days ago hurricane Eta caused much destruction in Central America including Honduras that left many dead, homeless and with a lot of destruction; ten days later a second hurricane is coming exactly in the same direction. it is expected to come ashore sometime today, and it is supposed to come as a category 5, stronger than the last one. The last two weeks have been a time to visit villages damaged by the rains and rivers overflowing, and seating with people who lost everything, listening to their stories, feeling helpless and trying to walk along them accompanying them in their suffering. I visited a family of 15 living in a mud house which is a room of about 6 by 8 meters, the creek by their house overflowed and they lost all they had, it washed away the mud of the walls and inside the small hut all their possessions got ruined by the rushing waters. Somehow these people find a way to keep going and in the midst of suffering and lost they are hopeful that God will help them. It is stories like this one and many similar ones that allow me to keep accompanying them and find a way to do my part.

In many ways I am still at a lost on how to help, my main work besides visiting people, has been trying to find money to buy food, and looking for donations to buy mattresses for people who have gone back home to nothing. another challenge is that after the hurricane many people are sick with skin rashes and ulcers, many people including me with colds and flu, and lots of people with stomach problems. So finding donations of medications for these illness has been another priority that I had to work with. Life is hectic and I am tired, but somehow God has allowed me to get the strength to continue doing what I can, which in the end is not a lot but is my best for now. So for now we put a bandage in the wound that needs surgery but that is all we can do.

The expectation after the last storm, and this new one is the lost of jobs that started with the pandemic and is now stressed by two hurricanes within two weeks. The result of this will be more mass migration through caravans as people see no other way forward. One example of this is the town that I live in, so far the Banana plantation which employs over 10,000 people in a place of about 70,000 people had remained open through the pandemic, but now with the damage because of flooding it has had to shut down and they have no date for reopening, perhaps 6 to 8 months closed. All of the sudden at least 8,000 of those people are without a job. Unfortunately that is the reality here and survival of the fittest is what is happening now. Crime has gone up since the hurricane, people robbing houses and stealing cars, motorcycles, and anything they can get their hands on, muggings have also gone up. it is a reality that will get worse before it gets better.

The hurricane also devastated the national infrastructure and at least 15 major bridges and most roads were left in ruins, blowing tires is becoming a part of life for me here. Life is crazy at moments and I expect the next few weeks will be physically and emotionally demanding. I will need a break soon. The major airport for national and international flights in San Pedro Sula was at least a meter under water, and it is inoperable for at least a month, most of the offices and the first floor of the airport are completely damage and cannot reopen until the middle of December. The sad part is that the government's response has been silent and telling everyone that every donation has to go through the government emergency response agency, which in turns steals these donations and they rarely reach the ones in need. So the situation here is the poor helping the poor, people sharing what they have and that is hopeful, people give what little they have and therein lies the hope of a better tomorrow for me; but at times hope is not easy to keep especially for me when I look at a future that might be grim for so many.

So after this long e-mail, I am coming to the point of asking for your help, I am not sure what to say, but if there is any way that you can help in this time of need for the people of Honduras I would appreciate it. If any of you have a way to help send me an e-mail and we can figure out how to get your help to the people that need it the most. The other thing I can ask of you is if you can pass along this to others that you might think can help would be appreciate it.

Anyhow that is life in Honduras for now, I will keep doing my best and finding my way in the midst of all of these happenings. Keep the Honduran people and me in your prayers so that we can find a path forward in the midst of so much loss and suffering.

Take care and God bless with much gratitude.