

April 8, 2012

From the Desk of Lisa Armstrong
Fellow Man International of Honduras



ASK, SEEK, KNOCK ...

"For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened." Matthew 7:8

Homecoming

It was my first day home in Honduras and already desperation and need were knocking at my door. I had been gone three months and yet, within less than an hour...they knew I was back. "Dear Lord" I cried, "the price of following You has become too great and the load far too heavy".

Her name was Cruz which is *cross* in Spanish. I found it ironic. Even her name represented what I was feeling in my heart. Today, this woman would be my cross to bear. She was in labor and her baby was positioned transverse or sideways. There was no way she would have the baby on her own. She needed a hospital and a surgeon for a C-section as soon as possible. She was at my door ... knocking. Her eyes wide with fear and her deeply furloughed brow screamed what her mouth could barely whisper. And yet, beneath her humble appearance and seemingly human condition, there was no mistaking the presence of Jesus at my door.

Impossible to Ignore the Call of Christ

The situation was easy enough to resolve, it hardly justified considering a one hour trip to the public hospital a "cross" but all the same, I was irritated. I had wanted to settle into my Hondu-

ran routine more easily...perhaps rest a bit and enjoy a few precious moments with my children before the chaos began again.

Cruz had known for more than a month that her baby was improperly positioned, but had waited until her labor pains were intense to find help. She, like so many of the poor of Honduras felt as though she had to wait for the emergency to be upon her before anyone would take notice or perhaps have compassion for her situation. And there she was...Christ disguised as a mother in anguish and in need of help. No matter how hard I tried to wriggle out of it, there simply was no way to ignore the call of Christ.

God's Grace in All Its Forms

Except for the occasional whimper or deep breath, Cruz did not speak as I drove. This provided a unique moment for contemplation and communion with Christ. Many times, I have asked God

"He comes to us as one unknown, without a name as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfill for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is."

Albert Schweitzer

Quick Facts

The maternal mortality

rate for women in

Honduras is 110 deaths

per 100,000 live births.

The infant mortality rate

is 20.44 deaths per 1,000

live births.



ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

how it is that His love and compassion for His people should be manifested in such things as rudimentary triage performed on patients who find their way to my home. Today, His love was just a simple ride to the hospital along with a bit of hand-holding just to make sure His message was received.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 1st Peter 4:10

No Thanks Necessary

The trip went by quickly and fortunately for me, the traffic was not as chaotic as usual. The public hospital was filled to the brim but strangely enough I was able to make my way through the crowd to the obstetrical door without much resistance. Even the guard at the door was willing to allow me access to the obstetrician working the crowded labor and delivery unit.

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I handed my hand-written "referral" to the doctor. With one very swift evaluation of the baby's position, the doctor quickly ushered Cruz through a door that lead her one step closer to a much needed C-section. Before she disappeared though Cruz took a moment to say, "Gracias Gringita". I barely had a chance to say "de nada". But truly the person who should have been saying "thank you" was me. Every time I have the privilege to serve one of God's children, I realize it is through service that God manifests himself to us. How priceless to spend a little bit of time in His presence! And suddenly what had



once been considered a cross to bear, was now a blessing that brought new meaning to the sacrifice of the cross on which Jesus died.

YOUR HELP SAVES MOTHERS' AND BABIES' LIVES

One of the most important roles Fellow Man International plays in the area of women's health is that of prenatal care. Honduras has the highest adolescent birth rate in Central America. One third of 15 to 24 year old mothers do not make even a single prenatal care visit and the same proportion give birth without a medical professional present. The Fellow Man International clinic provides a variety of services to women which help to reduce maternal/infant mortality and morbidity. Prenatal vitamins and folic acid are provided to all women of childbearing age. Thorough monthly prenatal care is provided to any woman who seeks medical attention at the clinic regardless of ability to pay. If a problem is discovered in the course the patient's care, FMI ensures that specialty care and services are obtained. On behalf of all our healthy mothers and babies, we extend to you our deepest gratitude!