

Faith In Practice

Life Changing Medical Mission

Strength In Weakness



Strength In Weakness. This virus is reminding us all how fragile life is. How quickly our lives can change. Of what is important. This virus is reminding me why this mission is so important to me, to so many of you. We consistently marvel at our Guatemalan brothers and sisters who have learned to live with an understanding of the fragility of life in a way that is difficult for us to imagine. We, who have lived, in many instances, protected lives. When we encounter those we serve and see the grace that emanates from them in the midst of this fragility, we see a transcending strength. In them, in their faith, we see Jesus. The One who in his weakness is strong.

I know in the uncertain days that follow, I will be remembering and looking to my Guatemalan brothers and sisters for guidance. My hope is that I can, we all can, meet the storm with the same kind of faith and hope that they do every day. That in our frailty, we too can be led into a lasting strength. A transcendent strength that resides in weakness as we seek to follow the One in whose weakness true strength is found. And, may we return to them soon. To bring our offerings to them, to receive their blessings and teachings in return. Called together as one community in his name.

Faith In Practice Teams. We are suspending teams*, currently, through May. We are amazed by our fabulous team leaders who are looking for dates to reschedule later this year, when possible. These committed leaders, who are on the front lines here in the U.S., who have so much to consider and manage in their own lives, are jumping in immediately to consider dates for rescheduling knowing how much this means to their patients and to their team members. They, as always, are expressing their love and compassion for their Guatemalan patients, their love for their team members, and placing these before their own concerns or needs. Our staff too are thinking of our volunteers and our patients first. They are energized by and ready to meet our team leaders who are looking toward returning to Guatemala as soon as possible.

So, while we are suspending teams in Guatemala for the time being, we are working diligently to prepare for teams returning to serve. And, we are also working with our partner hospitals and local authorities to determine how we might assist in this time of crisis in Guatemala. All of us know that there will be more to do than ever before and that God has more for Faith In Practice to do in the days ahead.

Our Best. On March 11, we were forced to evacuate a surgical and a medical team, out of concerns related to closing borders and airline cancelations. There were 700 people who had been waiting for months for March 12 to arrive so they could receive medical care, the possibility of a surgery, a wheelchair. There were patients who were scheduled for surgeries, who were told the morning of their surgeries that they would have to be postponed. It broke the hearts of our U.S. and Guatemalan volunteers. It broke the hearts of our staff. For our patients to be so close and yet to then be turned away. In thinking about this, I turned to the blog written from Jalapa on March 9 where I read:

*“Today is a special day. Our morning devotion was dedicated to Fausto, one of our long-time local volunteers, who has lost his daughter Fernanda in an accident. Although it was extremely hard for him to bury his child yesterday, he showed up today to continue contributing to the work of Faith In Practice. Fausto has inspired all of us: “I will be doing my best this week and I know you guys will be doing your best as well.” His dedication for taking care of people in need is tremendous....”**
[Blessing during the Robinson Clinic pictured above]*

For years, you all have been doing your best for those in need through Faith In Practice come what may. You have stepped out in faith with us, prayed for us, trusted in us. You have become family. Called together as one to do our best. In good times, and in times of sorrow.

Now more than ever, we feel this kinship. Now more than ever, we are seeing moments of grace and compassion and generosity and hope for the future through the Faith In Practice family. Now more than ever, we need to gather our hearts together in prayer as a family. To do, as Fausto said, our best. And, above all else, we must trust in the One who is the author of this mission and each of our days.

In this Lenten Season, may out of our fear, pain, and weakness arise hope, healing, and strength. Jesus transforming our weakness into transcendent strength. As only he can. As together we await Easter’s dawning.

Prayers. We are praying for each and every one of you in these challenging times. And, praying for all those in the U.S. and in Guatemala, and across the world, who are the most vulnerable,

physically and economically, those who always suffer the most in the midst of any crisis and especially once the crisis abates and the rest of the world moves on.

We are also asking for your prayers for our patients, our Guatemalan volunteers, and our staff as we work toward moving forward with hope, even in these uncertain times. For I know that God has more in store for Faith In Practice. Of that, I have no doubt.

Blessings,
Rev. Linda L. McCarty
President & CEO

“The grass withers and the flowers fade, but the word of our God endures forever.” Isaiah 40:8

**We had decided to suspend some upcoming teams and as we were communicating this decision individually to those teams, we received notice that Guatemala was considering closing her borders in order to prevent the virus' spread. We immediately evacuated the two teams then serving from Guatemala. The Stempel and Robinson teams' leadership, as always, was extraordinary. And, our Guatemalan staff managed the evacuation beautifully, with professionalism and grace. Friday night, the President of Guatemala announced that U.S. citizens would no longer be granted entry into Guatemala in light of outbreaks there. Our last volunteer left Guatemala early Saturday morning thanks to our staff on the ground. Today, Guatemala is closing her borders and closing the airport. Currently, there are two confirmed cases in Guatemala, both of which came through Europe. As Guatemala is ill-equipped to handle a major outbreak, these preventative measures are the best way to protect Guatemala's people.*

***Post by Valerie Truong, Robinson Medical Clinic Team Photographer/Blogger*



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Our mailing address is:

Faith In Practice
7500 Beechnut St. Suite 208
Houston, TX 77074

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