

Story and Prayer Request 2020-04

Story

This past weekend, the children of Niños con Valor along with Christians around the world celebrated Easter remotely. For many, against the backdrop of the overwhelming tragedy that continues to accompany the COVID-19 pandemic, these celebrations offered a respite of hope; even in the face of death, Christ is victorious!

However, the context in which we celebrate cannot be ignored. At the same time our children were singing hymns and hunting for chocolate eggs, billions of people around the world whose daily bread is gained on a daily basis continued to war against hunger and desperation.

In Luke 16, we read a story that Jesus shared about an unnamed rich man and a poor man named Lazarus. When the rich man, having passed away, realized how his lack of action in the face of Lazarus' poverty and sickness resulted in his eternal torment, he begged that Lazarus might be sent to warn his loved ones against repeating the error of his ways:

He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' [Abraham] said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Easter is the celebration of Christ rising from the dead – is his resurrection enough to convince us to repent and change our ways?

We are presently being confronted with a viral pandemic, yet we have lived and continue to live in the midst of a pandemic of injustice and inequality. As we consider the future, we need to ask ourselves – do we truly want to return to “normal”?

Apart from very concrete steps that people in positions of influence should take in order to better prepare nations for future healthcare crises, we need to respond to the injustice that has been laid bare throughout this pandemic. Our vulnerability and, more specifically, the unequal measure that this vulnerability is experienced by the poor and marginalized, has been exposed. What comes next should not be more of the same, but a concerted effort to rebuild our communities upon a foundation of compassion, justice and equality.

Here in Bolivia, these are the things we are reflecting on as Niños con Valor.

We have been in touch regularly with UNICEF and other residential programs, and while we are blessed to have such an incredible, supportive family around the world who have ensured the safety and wellbeing of our children throughout this crisis, we are devastated to hear about the desperation faced by so many other children in residential care.

And while we are grateful that our staff and their families are being provided for amidst widespread economic uncertainty, through our Fondo+ program, we are heartbroken by the overwhelming number of impoverished families living with HIV, unable to work due to the quarantine, who are seeking funds just to put food on their tables for a couple of weeks.

Perhaps this is more of a reflection than a story, yet as we struggle with what our role as a ministry is and should be moving forward, it is a discussion we want to have with all of our partners. God is doing incredible things through our partnership! Your efforts are truly having a transformative impact in the lives of some of Bolivia's most marginalized children. The question is, as we move through and eventually out of the current COVID-19 pandemic – how should we evolve? What more can we do to bring God's transformational love and confront the even greater pandemic of inequality and injustice?

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

Prayer Requests

- The nationwide quarantine in Bolivia, while slowing the spread of COVID-19, is creating a situation of desperation in families whose livelihood is earned day-to-day. We pray that the government, with the support of international partners, can provide impoverished families access to food and hygiene supplies to help them endure the impact of the quarantine.
- For our children, especially those with already weakened immune systems, that they would remain healthy and strong.
- For our caregiver staff, who are anxious as they continue to work and have children and/or elderly parents at home – may God grant them peace and strength to carry on providing our children with the love and attention they need.