



About the Author

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Dori was raised and educated in Montana. For many years, she was a teacher in Montana and Kansas before returning to graduate school in 1988, earning her master's degree in counseling from Regent University. Dori was ordained to the diaconate in 1998 and to the priesthood in 2000. Since then she has served in Honduras, Mexico, Texas, Montana, and Florida. Currently retired, Dori and her husband Pedro live in Homestead, Florida, and spend as much time as possible back home in Montana.

About Vintage Voice

Vintage Voice is a monthly publication written by beneficiaries of The Church Pension Fund. We hope you enjoy these articles and find them helpful. Articles are published with the authors' permission. If you have a reflection about your life in retirement, consider writing for the Vintage Voice! Send your submissions to vintagevoice@cpg.org.

VINTAGE VOICE



A Song for Moises

By The Rev. Dori Zubizarreta

Now that I'm retired, I have time to look back on my experiences while in active ministry. Hindsight is always 20/20 and I can see places where my inexperience was a hindrance, but I can also see times when God moved in amazing ways. These memories brighten my days as I face a new, unknown, and uncertain chapter in my life. One such event is forever implanted in my mind and challenges me to believe no matter the circumstances.

I was working as a chaplain at a home for abused and abandoned girls in Honduras. The day had been a long one, and I was anxious for some down time. I balanced the huge bowl of popcorn in one hand and a large glass of coke in the other as I settled into my recliner in front of the TV. I was happy to settle in for the night with my dog Charlie and TV programming from the U.S. The rain was coming in torrents, so I had to block off the space under the front door to keep the creepy crawlers from coming in out of the storm. A flying roach overcame the blockade and took flight toward the light behind my chair. Eliminating the pest took three swats, but I finally put the insect to rest against the wall. I would pick the bug up later, much later.

The sound of the phone jarred me awake out of a very pleasant dream. It was the guard at the property entrance gate down below. He said two young children had come from the barrio asking for me. When he asked what they wanted, they told him that "The baby has died, and we need the lady in the red truck." He wanted to send them away, saying to go with them at night was much too dangerous for me.

I had no idea who these kids were or what baby had died, but I put on my shoes, grabbed my keys and made a quick call over to the residence where the older girls lived. Ten of them met me at the gate and piled in the back of my little red Ford Ranger, and we headed off into the sea of rain and mud and into the barrio. The little truck struggled to plow through the thick, sticky mud, and the rain made it almost impossible to see where we were going.

Looking back now I can see that going off into the night into a dangerous barrio was a bit reckless. I don't think I would do it now but, back then, I didn't give it a second thought.

Finally, I made out the dim forms of people standing, knee deep in mud, in front of a tiny shack with a single lightbulb dangling over a makeshift

front door. This must be the place. The crowd parted and made a way for us to reach the door. We were met by a woman who appeared to be in her thirties. Without a word she stepped back so we could see a table in the center of the room with another light hanging from a cord above it. The dirt floor was wet and slippery, and the entire room was permeated with the smell I had learned to associate with death.

On the table was a tiny bundle covered in a white blanket. His mother told us his name was Moises and he was five months old. He was born with some sort of intestinal problem that had kept him in constant pain all of his short life. He had never laughed; he had never even smiled. His tiny little body had known only pain and suffering.

My girls, all very accustomed to death and suffering, immediately circled the table, joined hands and began saying the Lord's Prayer. Dreading what I was about to see, I moved to the table to lift the cloth from the tiny face. As I raised the cloth and looked at the child's face, I saw something that will be forever etched smile, into my memory. Moises, who had known only excruciating pain his entire life, had the most beautiful smile and his face, now bathed in the light of the dangling bulb, was that of a peaceful and content sleeping child.

As I got ready to anoint him, I called his mother close and wrapped my arm around her sagging shoulders. As I laid my hand on the child's head I said to her, "Senora, when your baby passed from this world to the next he saw something so beautiful that he smiled. God left that smile behind for you to see and know that your baby is safe in the arms of Jesus. He doesn't hurt anymore."

That night, in a tiny shack on the riverbank in a raging storm, the Holy Spirit had come down and touched us all. His Presence was palpable, and a sense of complete peace filled the room, making it hard to stand and not fall on our knees. The sound of the storm faded as the girls began to sing the beautiful Spanish worship song, "Cristo Es El Senor." I don't know how long we were there. For a time, the Eternal One had taken His place in our midst and we had glimpsed eternity.

The girls stayed up all night in our woodworking shop and fashioned a tiny coffin for this very small child who, through his death, had given us such a wonderful gift. The next morning, we took the bus we called Our Little Roses, put the casket behind the driver's seat, and with the bus overflowing with people, we carried that tiny child to his resting place. As we lowered the casket, the girls placed a beautiful cross with his name into the ground with it.

A child named Moises, who had known only pain and suffering, had brought the Presence of the Holy Spirit to each of us and had changed us forever. This experience, as well as others, comes into my retirement with me. I pray they will mold me into the person that God has been sculpting all my life, that I can truly be who He created me to be.



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