

It's True! One scholarly thing I learned in seminary was Hebrew writers widely used hyperbole in place of fact, and Jesus was known to multiply most statistics to meet his needs. My mom used to accuse me of "fibbing" when I did it, but today I blame it on Christian heritage. I'm uncertain what the Haitians blame it on, but "inflation of facts or situations" comes as natural to them as to me. Makes a good story, better!

For instance; when we returned from our short journey home, more rats than had signed the renter's agreement were living "upstairs." Since the storms they, like all Haitians were hungry. Joe fed them the tasty green biscuits he somehow gets through customs and for the next 3 nights it was a scramble of throwing them around and racing place to place. Then quiet.

Monday, a bedraggled rat came staggering down the hall toward the front room. I assumed he was looking for the doorway so attempted to direct him with the broom. Startled, he took off like the soccer king and began running under, around and over all objects as we chased, swatted, shoved furniture, squatted and batted at the little devil. Suddenly, he dropped and rolled on his back like "dead bug." Thinking we had won I picked him up by the tail at which time he took a chomp toward my thumb and landed hard on the floor to bounce about 2 feet in the air before heading back the way he came.

In search of places he might stop to die, we discovered one large tarantula corpse, an empty wine bottle (communion of course) and a live scorpion. In less than an hour we had furniture back in place and all cobwebs swept down for a day. I'd spent the night before losing weight the yucky way and needed a rest after the rat race. He left, I dozed. It's true!

People on La Gonave are hungry. We have not heard yet if we get any share of the GBGM emergency food grant, since all of Haiti is hungry. A boat trip to Trou Jacques, yesterday revealed more hunger and more problems. The homes are full of mud, surrounded by rock and boulders a foot deep, and brush is piled head high. Neighbor lives with neighbor and when Lamare asked why they don't just move down the beach instead of living in a funnel, they said, "cement is expensive." I left meds for the diarrhea that follows floods and fever meds for kids.

In Point a Rocquette, Father Roosevelt said he packaged food for 160 and looked out to see about 3000 in the street from the mountain. Yesterdays small bags were going up the mountain to Pleasance. We visited Clifford, the baby left to die from malnutrition a few weeks ago. He smiled and cooed at me and although still sick he will live.

In my clinic today I weighed a 13 month old at 7kg who has yellow hair and rice water stools. Mom and Dad look about as bad. The only medicine was money to buy three days worth of food and return to the clinic. There are more like them. But mostly there are just hungry. And like us, they wait to hear if food will come, and for prices to go down, and for kongo beans and peanuts to grow, and well, they wait. Some get away, some doze, and, some die.

Shirley, La Gonave, Haiti, October 1st, 2008, waiting. No joke.

