

Wakeup Call: This Worldwide Issue Is a Greater Killer Than COVID-19

A photograph was sent to me recently by one of our priests serving in a teeming metropolis in South Asia. The picture was of a little boy.

He must be 7 or 8 years old, a beggar boy, just wearing little shorts and nothing else. No shoes, no socks, nothing. But then he's holding on to maybe a 1-year-old child. And they're hugging each other, and streams of tears run down from this boy's eyes. And I immediately realized that he's the older brother.

South Asia has many large cities, some with populations in excess of 24 million people—almost three times the size of New York City. These cities are like an ocean of people every 24 hours. Millions of people pass through their major train stations, and every second, a train comes and goes. Since the pandemic, these train stations sit lifeless while hundreds of thousands of children who once survived by begging and getting food under the shelter of the station are forced to the streets.

The boys in the photograph must be those who have moved to the streets, and they must be starving. I'm asked all the time to talk about the COVID crisis in the South Asian nations. And I tell them, COVID-19 is only 5% of the problem. 95% of the problem is starvation.

It is so easy to get caught up in the politics and worldly anxieties overlooking the problems that existed before the pandemic, but these problems—starvation, homelessness—have only become *greater*. We try so hard to figure things out and ask God why, but we'll always reach a point where we can go no

further. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding," reads Proverbs 3:5.

We are called to do the works of God. In Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 10, Jesus sends out His disciples to do the Lord's work but also warns them of the persecution that was to come. Someone once said that Jesus paid the price completely for redemption, not just for the spirit, but the soul and body too.

But He didn't pay the cost of delivery. That delivery charge is on us. We must choose with our will, to live simply, to go and to give so that others can be helped.

My mother, who had never left our village, prayed for hours every day. In her deep faith, she longed for one of her sons to serve God, all while having no clue her impact would one day touch hundreds of nations through her prayers for me and what would become my work. You see, even if people can't afford to give a lot of money or go serve themselves, their prayers impact the lives of millions around the world.

The coronavirus might be closing every traditional door we know, but it is also opening doors. At Gospel for Asia (GFA World), we have served food and called all walks of life to create a deeper, more meaningful relationship with them in Christ's name.

Second Corinthians 8:12 (ESV) says, "For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have." Whether it's donating to food banks, donating money or praying for all the children across the globe, it makes a genuine impact in their lives and glorifies God. {eoa}

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