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Haiti is a study in extremes. On the one hand, one is struck by the beauty of the country's beaches and the ocean and the appealing climate. And on the other, is the trash. The trash that is absolutely everywhere. All trash is simply thrown on the ground in yards, streets, and fields. It is in big mounds. People graze their hogs and goats in the trash. The beaches are covered in a layer of trash. The gutters are filled with garbage in various states of decay.

By the time we returned to Port au Prince after 5 days in Torbeck, the pervasive filth was really getting to me. I realized that what the hogs and goats ate in trash, the people ultimately ate when they slaughtered their animals. And I understood why cholera is a problem, given the human waste on the streets and in the water.

The end of our trip included a day in Port au Prince. One of our stops was the site of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, destroyed in the 2010 earthquake. It looks like a Roman ruin, with a tall wall with openings where the stained glass windows used to be. The area around the ruins is home beggars. As soon as we got out of the van, two young boys crowded around us begging for food. We were told to ignore them. Turning my back on those kids made me feel physically ill. Even now, I hate the decision to do that.

With that emotional experience, I walked up to the cathedral building. I looked through what used to be a window into what used to be sacred space. I think I really wanted to shut out Haiti for a minute and try to find Jesus. I didn't find him, looking into that broken building. All I saw was broken glass, trash, and pieces of concrete. The building, like Jesus' tomb, was empty. Jesus wasn't there.

I dreaded having to turn back around and encounter those kids again.

When I did turn around, however, I noticed that there was a large Roman Numeral XI and the word "Station" spray painted in red on the outside of the cathedral wall. Someone had spray painted the Stations of the Cross on the building.

Jesus was not to be found in the cathedral ruins but I see now he was at Station XI. And among those beggars and all the people of Haiti –
the poor,
the sick,
the naked,
the thirsty, and
those imprisoned by poverty.

Haiti is a country filled with gratitude despite the overwhelming human need.

- The people recognize Jesus living among them.
- They are filled with joy.
- There is laughter on the streets.
- And music.
- And lots of vibrant colors.

One of the Episcopal priests we visited – Pere (Father) Fon-Fon, who runs a hospital for disabled kids, told us "life is very good!"

Indeed, life is very good and Haiti is a living example of this. For me, and for my son, who wrapped his arms around the country, the people, and their culture, this is our take-away from a life-changing experience in Haiti.

